

# DRAGON+

## Icewind Dale's hottest fashion

HUMUNGOUS  
HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE!

**Dead Milkmen:**  
Inside the  
Lost Tomb of  
The Bitchin'  
Chimera



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

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## ISSUE 35

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### Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 35

Editor-in-Chief Matt Chapman thanks D&D for providing him with essential life skills and looks forward to 2021.



### Imagining The Ampersand: Emi Tanji

There's nothing more D&D than three kobolds in a trench coat, the Art Director explains.



### Holiday Gift Guide 2020



### D&D Virtual Play Weekends

Dungeon Masters aren't the only ones who can give inspiration! Our holiday gift guide is loaded with great gets and gives for your favorite adventurer (and yes, your favorite adventurer can be you).

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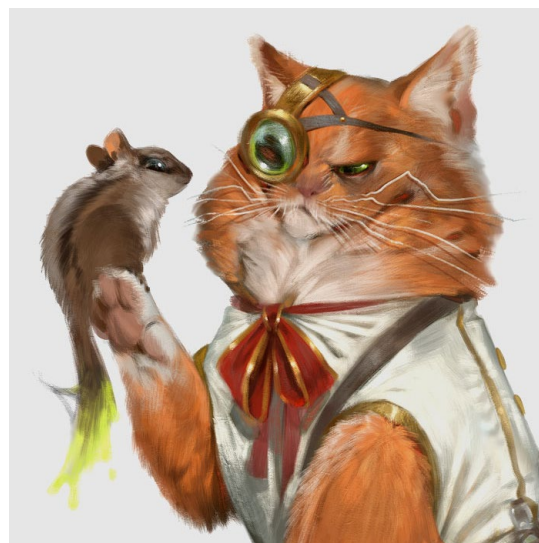
The latest D&D innovation is here to teleport the fun right into your living room...

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## Streaming Highlights

Our glorious holiday streams give the gift of gold, frankincense, and mirth! Minus the gold and frankincense...



## Adventure Cats and the Lost Pyramid of Hissar, Part 2

Ask their owners—cats make the perfect predator. Or in this case, adventuring party. Continuing our fiction from Adam Lee, with illustrations by April Prime, we return to the Adventure Cats of D&D!

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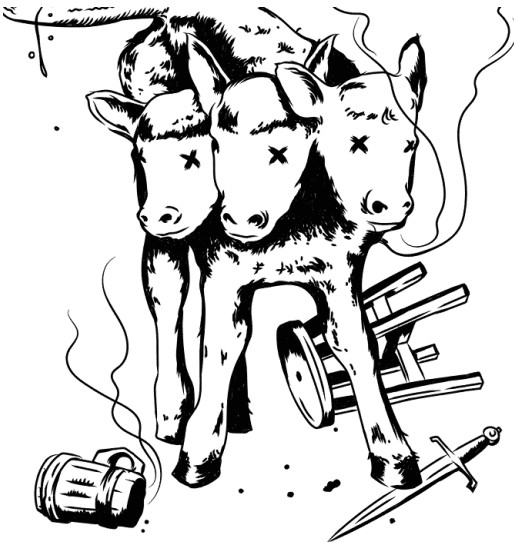
## Dragon Classics

When it comes to artifacts appearing in Tasha's Cauldron of Everything, we consider a veritable walking tank that's makes for one mighty, mighty servant!



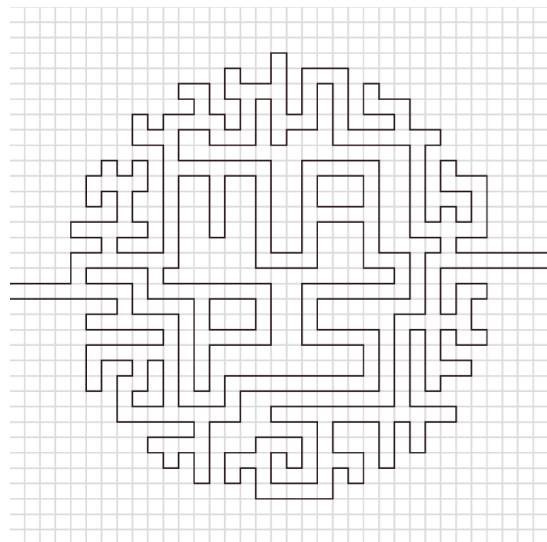
## The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

This issue we dig deep into Barovian soil to exhume content that compliments Curse of Strahd.



## The Dead Milkmen: Lost Tomb of the Bitchin' Chimera

Andrew Ervin explains how his



## Maps of the Month: Icewind Dale

In the spirit of the season, we've collected a few more maps for

comedy one-shot adventure written for friends became the official D&D module for the punk band.

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games taking place in any icy dale.

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## Unearthed Arcana: Subclasses Revisited

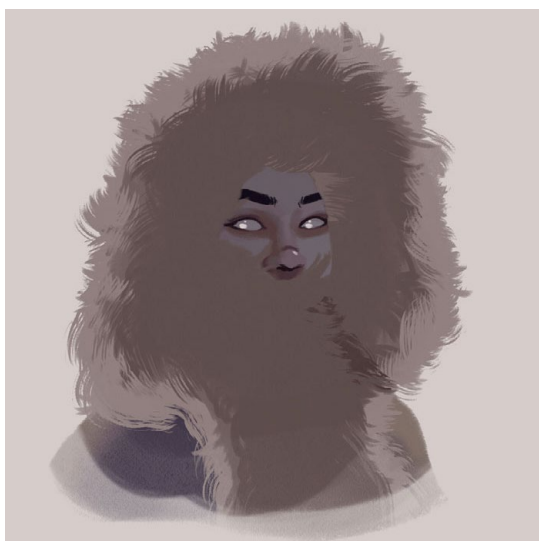
Sharing proposed new character subclasses empowered by dragons.



## Comic: Icewind Dale Rime of the Frostmaiden

There's a moose loose with a frozen caboose in Jason Thompson's latest masterpiece.

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## Character Concepts: Winter Fashion

What do you wear in a season that can only be described as endless winter? Samantha Darcy profiles the best dressed inhabitants of Icewind Dale.

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## Dan Tovar

Our introduction to members of the D&D Team and their roles continues with the Senior Producer for the D&D studio.



## Next Issue: Dragon+ 36

Join us as the calendar flips over to 2021...

# DRAGON+ 35

## Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 35

Editor-in-Chief Matt Chapman thanks D&D for providing him with essential life skills and looks forward to 2021.

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**A**t the tail-end of 2019 I looked at the upcoming calendar changeover with a glee that only gamers could understand. When those fireworks lit up the sky over Paris, France on New Year's Eve (we were visiting our new nephew Hugo and stayed to bask in the Parisian party atmosphere), I was well aware the clocks had rolled over to a significant number. Who wouldn't want to celebrate 2020: a double-crit in the world's greatest roleplaying game!



(Select to view)

To quote Morpheus from *The Matrix*, "Fate, it seems, is not without a sense of irony." Without calling back everything this year threw at us (you know, you were there!), it's safe to say that this is not exactly the double-crit experience we expected.

And yet, human beings are adaptable creatures. And none more so than those who have fine-tuned their problem-solving skills in fantasy worlds.

I've always prided myself on being one of those people who meets a challenge by throwing a number of creative solutions at it. Sure, some of those might be as bonkers as putting **three kobolds in a trench coat**, but D&D taught me to see things from multiple angles

and to use what I've got to overcome any challenge. And boy are those skills useful in a pandemic!

Take modern-day foraging as an example. When people were queuing around the block to shop at major supermarkets with empty shelves, I went from local shop to corner store to piece together the essentials we needed. And with even pasta in ridiculously short supply, I found a company offering to post weekly boxes of this foodstuff I hadn't previously thought of as a 'treat'.



Lockdown tea (select to view)

When deliveries from food stores were still booked up weeks in advance, I applied some lateral thinking (did you know an office supply company will deliver the world's largest bag of Yorkshire Tea even if you're an individual? The corporate-sized box of biscuits also came in handy). My wife even went full druid, growing tomatoes using the seeds she harvested from the ones we'd eaten.

This is the same kind of thinking that realizes the *shape water* cantrip gains new powers in

Icewind Dale: from burying a creature to insta-building an igloo! Or sees a party escape the clutches of a mind-control cult using a carrot!\*

The D&D Team also pivoted to try and help deal with the effects of a pandemic that suddenly limited human interactions. We may not have been able to gather at tables in person, but the *Stay at Home. Play at Home* initiative provided free gaming material and helped bring us together in other ways. If you're like me, having that regular contact with friends over the internet was a blessing, and the ability to escape to other worlds made a lockdown just a little more bearable. That's been followed up by the new *D&D Virtual Play Weekends*, bringing amazing games into your home every month.

If that makes it sound like we've all been having a great adventure, that's not my intent. For most, this has been a period to endure, not enjoy, and it's still far from over. For others, it's been a period of even greater tragedy.

Yet I want to temper the heartbreak of this year and all its missed experiences (my dad's 75th birthday, my parents' 50th wedding anniversary) by imagining the celebrations we're going to have when we're finally allowed to gather together.

Right now it feels as if those two dice we loved so much when we first saw **Max Dunbar's cover** landed on double-1, rather than the 20s they were supposed to deliver! In the spirit of Spinal Tap, we're turning our d20s up a notch next year ("These go to 21!").

So let's all get ready to leave the year 11 (seriously, double-1!) in a blaze of VFX as we time travel two millennia to the happy gatherings of 2021. All things being equal, I'll see you at the anticipated 2021 D&D conventions, if I don't see you at my **friendly local gaming store** first.

Matt Chapman

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\*This really happened in a game I run—shout out to Scott, Sandie, Ben, Calum, and Jim for their quick thinking. If my players had dipped their thumbs in the bowl of "blood ink" and pressed them to the contracts to make their mark, they'd have been under the cult's spell and imprisoned in the mines. Instead, Grexis the goliath took one of the carrots meant for Nelly the war horse and squashed it beneath his thumb so none of the ink touched his skin. After leaving a carrot print rather than a thumb print, the goliath then sleight-of-handed the heroic vegetable around the party, saving them from a spell of hard labor! Coincidentally, if anyone wants to play an *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*-style prison-break scenario, I have an unused one ready to go...

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## Imagining The Ampersand: Emi Tanji

There's nothing more D&D than three kobolds in a trench coat, the Art Director explains.

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“The moment I saw Scott Murphy’s three kobolds piece for *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* I thought it was such a good image. The campaign itself has a survival aspect to it—it’s set in this dire, freezing, endless night. But the three kobolds in a trench coat art is totally silly and as soon as I saw that situation, I

thought, ‘That’s D&D right there!’” Art Director Emi Tanji tells *Dragon+*.

“I love the idea that the kobolds put themselves in this trench coat and they think it’s the smart thing to do. This happens in so many D&D games where instead of performing the simple, direct action that takes you straight to the source, characters think, ‘What if we do this?’ But then if someone rolls badly, it’s all over.

“Building up those sorts of goofy scenarios is one of the things that makes D&D so much fun to play. But honestly, it’s cold, it’s snowing, and everybody’s trying to get home as quickly as possible. No one cares about these three kobolds trying to be so sneaky.”



(Select to view)

Despite the wintry bleakness of the *Rime of the Frostmaiden* storyline, it’s peppered with amusing items, characters, and situations designed to be bright spots among the darkness. Those became especially useful when it came time to create the D&D Team’s yearly apparel to raise funds for the *Extra Life* charity. The search for an image to grace those *Custom Ink clothing items* eventually stopped at the feet of

what could be—but definitely isn’t—one very large kobold.

“Extra Life is such a great organization and every year we try to do something fun with the fundraising apparel we create for it,” Tanji explains. “We knew we could use Auril herself, as the Frostmaiden has an absolutely gorgeous owl form—although it can be a little intense and intimidating. The snowy owlbear would also have made a good candidate, but I was already able to create a design to help with the fundraising for Red Nose Day *using that character*. Then there were some pieces created by *April Prime* that are always fun, including tavern decoration Ol’ Bitey. But when we started work using the three kobolds, we knew we’d struck gold.”

While *Dragon+* doesn’t want to

appear greedy, we can't help wondering what's the most kobolds that could fit in a trench coat. Is three the limit?



“I think for a normal human-sized trench coat you could fit four kobolds. They could squeeze and hug in real tight, with maybe a little one either clinging on the back or even the front of the other three,” she calculates. “But there are some pretty big trench coats in D&D. It could be a whole town. Maybe that’s where kobolds vacation for the winter, inside of a giant’s trench coat.”

(Select to view)

**When you were creating this image, did you assign personalities to the three kobolds?**

There’s usually a three-character setup with something like this, with the smart one on top. Initially, I wondered if I should make the bottom one really big or chunky? In the end I had to simplify the design to ensure it worked graphically as an image on a T-shirt. But it’s always fun to think about the story, no matter what you’re doing.



(Select to view)

**We already know that you really love goblins. Is there equal love for kobolds as well?**

I haven't had as much chance to play D&D in 2020 as I'd like, but as part of *D&D Celebration* I got to play in the latest Epic campaign that Chris Lindsey developed. It was my first time getting to participate in that kind of game so I was really excited. I played a kobold and I just loved it, so kobolds and goblins are currently my go-to. It's easy to forget how small they are. At one point we were fighting while riding axe beaks, and I said, 'I don't need my own axe beak. I'm just going to hop on the back of another adventurer because that's totally possible for someone as small as my character.'

**Your image has helped to raise money for Extra Life. What does the work that it funds mean to you?**

Every year since 2013 we've been creating shirts for Extra Life, so I've now been involved for seven years. It's been awesome to get to be a part of it, no matter how small, even if it's just creating a design. The charity supports the Children's Miracle Network



(Select to view)

Hospitals and works to give kids a sense of normalcy during some really hard times. They provide game rooms and activities when kids have extended stays, while also supporting the parents and siblings. It's such a wonderful cause. Seattle Children's hospital is amazing and I've also been supporting the Hawaii Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, which is where I was born. It's been nice to be able to give back to them.

## TANJI'S KNAPSACK OF EVERYTHING ADORABLE

If you're new to Emi Tanji's work, we highly recommend checking out [this interview](#) to see further examples of her



charming artistic output. You can also download and print the incredible cut-out-and-keep figures she's created for *Dragon+*: **Slobberchops**; and the **Snowy Owlbear**.

And adventurers of all ages can also make their way through the Dankwood with **Muk, the very bravest goblin**

(and his best friend Birdsquirrel) as they search for a great treasure. Meanwhile, brand new activity book ***Muk's Guide to Everything He Learned From Tasha*** is out now, featuring puzzles, adventure hooks written by Adam Lee, and unique Dankwood critters developed by Chris Lindsay, with each page made to be colored. All donations benefit the Extra Life charity so your purchase helps a truly great cause!

**You created the original designs for Ultra Pro's Figurines of Adorable Power? Have you been involved with the more recent additions?**

I don't have the same level of input because Ultra Pro's artists have taken the reins and are really going for it. But I still get to see what's going on and give feedback, which is great because they're fun to work with and are putting out such amazing stuff. I loved the design of the **giff**.

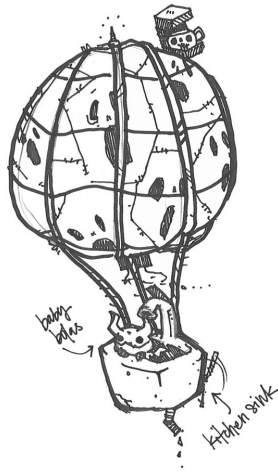
**What else are you working on right now?**

I'm currently dipping into the magical world of art direction and starting to work with artists. The incredible Kate Irwin has been shouldering fifth edition like nobody's business and she is my mentor, so I'm in very good hands. I'm excited to get to work with the amazing talent pool that we already have but we're always on the lookout for new artists. **Our website** has a direct email address where they can send samples of their work. That's actually seen by art

directors on both *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Magic: The Gathering*, so it gets a lot of eyes on it.

### Which D&D creature would be the hardest to turn into something cutesy?

I have to admit that creatures are pretty much my favorite thing about D&D—and in general. I love monster movies and fun creature folklore so I'm not convinced there's a creature that can't be cutified.



(Select to view)

### What about something like a tomb tapper?

That is horrifying. A tomb tapper has these really creepy appendages and no head. Shawn Wood created a lot of concept art for those and some of his images are truly terrifying! Yet I think even that can be cutified. It's got a big mouth, so it could have a big smile.

We've now seen some amazing art created for this good cause—

alongside the three kobolds, we loved Lulu and Slobberchops from *Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus*. How are you going to top that for next year's Extra Life?

There'll be so much opportunity to create some really fun stuff next year. I don't think there'll be any shortage of inspiration. I wish I could tell your readers more but I can't! Oh, my gosh, that's going to be a fun sandbox to play in. I'm really excited.



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You can hear Emi Tanji discuss her work on Dungeons & Dragons on the ***Behold Her*** podcast, connect with her on **Twitter**, and help raise money for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals via her **Extra Life** page.

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AGE 12+

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME

STARTER SET

The ultimate game of your imagination, complete with monsters, magic, and treasure. For 1 or more beginning to intermediate players.

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

FOR ANY NUMBER OF PLAYERS, AGES 10 AND UP

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

EXPERT RULEBOOK

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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Plunder our indispensable guide to the best D&D presents and make this a holiday to remember...

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**F**ans of the world's greatest roleplaying game deserve similarly great gifts—their sense of wonder is so highly developed that the mundane just won't cut it! Especially this year, when the fantastical is likely to have been in much shorter supply than usual. The year 2020 might have failed us as a double-crit, but you can still gift like a boss and hit those critical successes.

Whether you're a dice goblin hoarding boxes of shiny math rocks, a fashion icon hoping to style it out as the best-dressed gamer, or an avid reader looking to devour the latest D&D publications by the light of a giant d20—we've got you covered! And be sure to also check out the [downloadable D&D Holiday Gift Guide revealed last month](#), which includes ideas for North America, the United Kingdom and Asia-Pacific.



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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# JEWELRY

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## DEATH SAVES FANTASY/HEAVY METAL STREETWEAR

Joe Manganiello's Death Saves store continues to channel its founder's vivid nostalgia and lifelong passions for fantasy and sci-fi through the mediums of metal art, illustration, and typography. And its army of tattooed elves has been busier than Tiamat's dentist in the run up to the holiday season. From incredible rings and jewelry to intricate pin badges, there's something for every flavor of fashionista.

It'll come as no surprise to find that Manganiello's infamous D&D character Arkhan the Cruel makes an appearance among the store's items, including a range of pin badges that feature the Dragon Highlord and oathbreaker paladin as illustrated by Max Dunbar (also available as a sew-on patch).



Arkhan also appears on a pendant made by master craftsman Geoff Thomas, which Joe himself has often been seen wearing. And Thomas continues that tradition of incredibly detailed custom jewelry with the made-to-order Cursed Skull of the Dragon Wizard Ring.

“Most of our artwork is original. We work with a wide range of artists from around the globe and commission them based on their various strengths and styles to create wearable art,” founder Joe Manganiello tells *Dragon+*. “Yet we are serious historians in terms of old school fantasy, horror, and science fiction. I think you’d be hard-pressed to find a piece of art in any of those categories that somehow slipped by us.”

With that in mind, Death Saves has presented its take on one of the most infamous monsters in the D&D universe: the mind flayer. Also crafted by Thomas and made to order, the limited-edition ring

features hyper stylized textures on its surface and one of the illithid's victims as a hidden surprise on the inside!

**MSRP: Arkhan the Cruel, Red (Enamel Pin \$12, Patch \$10); Arkhan the Cruel Pendant (\$1,250); Cursed Skull of the Dragon Wizard Ring (Silver \$495, Duality \$1,095); D&D Limited Edition Lumed Mind Flayer Ring (\$990)**

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## BEADLE & GRIMM'S

Premium adventuring company Beadle & Grimm's knows a thing or two about making amazing accessories. Its Platinum, Gold, "Sinister" Silver, and Legendary versions of major D&D campaigns always include items that are as relevant to the plot as they are stylish to wear. And if you're looking to add an extra level of immersion to any game, some of those items are available to purchase as single pieces—although the most exclusive additions will only ever appear in the premium boxes.



Whether you're sporting a Harper's pin as you scheme, spy, and sabotage for the "common good" or showing the Shark God you care so that maybe he won't eat you, you'll be well dressed as those in-game situations play out.

**MSRP: Harper's pin (\$20); Shark God medallion (\$20); Emerald Enclave brooch (\$20); Lords Alliance ring (\$30); Arcane Brotherhood pin (\$20)**

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## FOR FANS BY FANS

The creators at For Fans By Fans design officially licensed gear for the people who love it the most. To be sure of this devotion, the site runs regular competitions and asks artists to submit their work, with

special guest judges picking their favorite designs to be put into production. It's a way of building a community that bridges the gap between fans, artists, and the worlds that inspire them.

There's a real attention to detail in the D&D wearables you'll find on the site. Whether it's the stained-glass effect on its Gelatinous Cube pin (which allows you to see right through it, capturing the essence of this dungeon crawling monster) or Christa Diehl's (A.K.A. **Christa D.**) adorable mini-pin set.

"The key to taking a creature and making it look cute and non-threatening is to focus on round shapes, because it makes everything seem less dangerous in general. Round shapes and big eyes help give creatures personality. The **Cute But Deadly** beholder was my first submission to the site, and I realized I could go even rounder and use less detail to keep it very simple. The cutest form of most things is a baby and while babies are not very round, there's a kitten-esque feel to the four creatures in my **Dungeons & Dragons Mini Pin Set**," she tells *Dragon+*.



D&D fans looking to fully represent should also check out For Fans By Fans' "Mega" pin, which lives up to its name at 5.72cm by 6.17cm.

"Growing up I was always a big fan of the Dungeons & Dragons cartoon, so I knew all about the characters and creatures. I also love the Dungeons & Dragons logo; it's so striking. I did a lot of research on which creatures were the most popular and which might fit the shape the best, and we went back and forth on which we'd include. When **the ampersand logo** was released, it really took off and became one of the site's bestsellers," says artist rozilla74, also known as Antony Rozwadowski.

"I'm always looking to improve upon concepts, so after the success of that first ampersand logo I went back and designed **a second version**. I consulted a lot of my friends about which characters I

should include. The response was that I should definitely include an owlbear and that I also had to get a giant in there.”

**MSRP: Gelatinous Cube pin (\$12); Dungeons & Dragons mini pin set (\$15); Ampersand mega pin (\$15)**

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## PINFINITY

This innovative company creates augmented reality collectible pins that bring your favorite fandoms to life with animation, sound, and interactive experiences. Scanning any of the three Dungeons & Dragons themed pins using its free mobile app makes them pop on the screen of your phone. As the face of the pin badge becomes a viewing platform of its own you can enjoy art from D&D lore, synced to music performed by Midnight Syndicate. Check out [the video here](#) to see the AR in action.



**MSRP: Dungeon Master pin; Dragon Ampersand pin; d20 pin  
(\$11.99 each)**

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## ALCHEMY UK

Metallic dragons come in many flavors, but the pewter dragon is native to a specific region in England (although it can be shipped worldwide). This stunning antiqued pewter dragon is hand crafted by the artisans at Alchemy UK and comes packaged in a Dungeons & Dragons-branded black velvet drawstring pouch for extra sophistication.



**MSRP: Dungeons & Dragons ampersand pendant (£19/\$14.25)**



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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# PLUSHIES, FIGURES & MINIS

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## DUNGEONS & DRAGONS DRIZZT & GUENHWYVAR PREMIUM ACTION FIGURE

**Max Dunbar** rubs shoulders with some powerful people. When he's not convincing Minsc to sit still (Boo needs no such instruction) for long enough to capture his signature face tattoo in **IDW's Dungeons & Dragons comic**, he's pulling on a ski jacket and heading to Icewind Dale to see another D&D legend in action.

"I was sent a large amount of research on Drizzt, including reference for the character that showed every little bit of detail. The armor he's wearing is beautifully designed and very ornate and I could see it in all of its glory to capture the details accurately," Dunbar says, referencing the incredible images he's created for the box that contains the action figures of Drizzt and Guenhwyvar.



If R.A. Salvatore's dwarf hero and his faithful panther companion demanded the necessary amount of respect, then the location the character finds himself in also needed to be accurately depicted. Dunbar researched both real-world photography and images from the classic *Icwind Dale* video game to recreate the snowy environment.

"The screenshots from the Baldur's Gate series of video games helped me get an idea of the architecture and the setting. I assumed that it was all going to be evergreen forest and snow and mountains, but I wanted to make sure I had an accurate depiction of it," he says.

"I was also responsible for coloring this image so I needed to understand the way different times of the day might influence that. Snow is very reflective, so bright sunlight and sunsets affect it very differently. I made a collage of mountains, snow, and trees to have open on my computer screen as I was working and took inspiration

from here and there.



(Select to view)

“Of the two pieces I created for the action figure box art, one was a sunset and used the appropriate lighting scheme. I wanted the other to look as cold as possible, so I used a blue sky. It’s midday and the characters are on top of a mountain, so I threw a bunch of snow particles into the wind to make it look bright but very cold.”

**MSRP: Dungeons & Dragons Drizzt & Guenhwyvar Premium Action Figure (\$39.99)**

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## FIGURINES OF ADORABLE POWER

Sometimes only a few words are needed where many might otherwise be used, and calling your range of collectibles “Figurines of Adorable Power” says everything you need it to.



UltraPro's range assembles the cutest little monster compendium you've ever seen, with the owlbear, red dragon, flumph, mimic, gazer, giff, and mimic getting the chibi treatment in the first two releases. They're about to be joined by the **bulette**, **black dragon**, **goblin**, and **roper**!

**MSRP: Figures of Adorable Power (\$12.99 each)**

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## POP! GAMES: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Bow before the terrible and powerful visage of... Pop! Asmodeus! He may seem like the cutest version of the Lord of the Nine Hells ever created but he still needs to be regarded with suspicion lest he

try to bargain for your soul. Pop! Mind Flayer is also a creature you wouldn't want to meet alone in the Underdark. But Pop! Minsc and Boo and **Gamestop Exclusive** Pop! Drizzt Do'Urden with Guenhwyvar will join your cause in any fight against those evildoers.



**MSRP: Pop! Asmodeus! (\$11); Pop! Mind Flayer (\$11); Pop! Minsc and Boo (\$11); Pop! Drizzt Do'Urden with Guenhwyvar (\$22.99)**

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## JADA TOYS' D&D NANO METALFIGS

Many and varied are the physical objects that have represented Dungeons & Dragons characters and creatures since the game first

launched in 1974. Bottle caps, tokens, jellybeans, LEGO models and an array of random items have populated our fantasy worlds over the years (not to mention the **dime store toys**, whose role led to their canonization in the game). If you're looking to ditch stand-ins and offer your players high-quality miniatures that feel weighty, diecast modelmaker Jada Toys has your back.

“Ever since we launched our Nano Metalfigs line years ago, we’ve had people reach out to us and say, ‘You’ve gotta make D&D!’” says Brian Sun, Senior Marketing Manager. “Really this was inevitable.”



(Select to view)

The Jada Toys team brainstormed which creatures and characters would be immortalized in its first foray into the world of Dungeons & Dragons.

“A lot of us had to learn about the individual characters, and the D&D Team helped us there,” Sun remembers. “The design of creatures in Dungeons & Dragons is also very specific,” adds Juhn Lim, Director of Product Development. “This isn’t a generic, one-size-fits-all dragon you could find on any shelf. The design of the head and the horns are iconic, and we think fans will appreciate that accuracy.”



The collection includes a red dragon, a beholder, a mind flayer, drow ranger Drizzt, and *Baldur's Gate's* Minsc and Boo, alongside other various race and class combinations. “Starter” packs include four human-sized figures, “Medium” packs bring together four figures plus a medium-sized monster, while the “Deluxe” pack adds the young red dragon and four figures.



(Select to view)

“We make sure that the whole package has a cool look to it, and we often use metallic finishes to give the figures a premium feel.” says Juhn. “They’re still durable enough that you could toss them around, but they have that presence where if you shine a light on them on a shelf it’s going to be very eye-catching.”

**MSRP: D&D Nano Metalfigs (\$4.99 starter pack, \$9.99 medium pack, \$14.99 deluxe pack)**

# WIZKIDS ADULT SAPPHIRE DRAGON AND CHARDALYN DRAGON

Size doesn't always matter when it comes to how terrifying a creature is—although if you're brave enough to use the *scroll of tarrasque* summoning from *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* you will know true fear! Yet these two dragons from WizKids cast a fearsome shadow over your tabletop.



(Select to view)

The glittering sapphire dragon—completely translucent with gem-like effects on its wings and body—is based on art created for the 45th anniversary of Dungeons & Dragons and stands over 160mm tall. It perfectly captures the creature's psionic nature, as its levitating horns and spines float in place, held aloft by its psychic force.

In comparison, the chardalyn dragon is a construct. The evil suffusing its body (and what a frame at more than 200mm long) imbues the dragon with malevolence, allowing it to enjoy the terror it stokes. It's sculpted in highly detailed features and uses premium paints.



(Select to view)

“The D&D Team let us know how important this gargantuan dragon construct was to the storyline,” says Patrick O’Hagan, Executive Producer for RPGs at WizKids. “I want to call out that our premium figure of it weighs 3lbs!”

There are plenty of other creatures now available for those dragons to terrify in WizKids’ *Icewind Dale: Rime of Frostmaiden* line (although some of those are pretty scary themselves—we’re looking at you tomb tapper!). That range includes the abominable yeti, knucklehead trout, the snowy owlbear, gnoll vampire Tekeli-li, goliath werebear Oyaminartok, and many forms of the Frostmaiden herself, which come in blind booster boxes containing four random miniatures (one rare and three common/uncommon figures).



(Select to view)

**MSRP: D&D Icons of the Realms: Sapphire Dragon (\$69.99), D&D Icons of the Realms: Chardalyn Dragon (\$79.99), D&D Icons of the Realms blind booster boxes (\$16.99 booster, \$135.92 brick)**

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## BEADLE & GRIMM'S PLUSHY CHARACTERS

Who would have thought a plushy companion from the Nine Hells could be so adorable! Beadle & Grimm's skipped the demons and devils from *Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus*, and instead turned Lulu the hollyphant (a little flying elephant creature which follows the party around on their travels) into a figure the whole table can engage with.

"Lulu is very cute and very sweet, which makes a nice contrast to the hellscape you find yourselves in. We created this pint-size plushy that the DM can utilize to help propel that character forward," explains Matthew Lillard, co-founder of Beadle & Grimm's Pandemonium Warehouse. "I think it helps keep Lulu present as a character," adds co-founder Bill Rehor. "It's sometimes easy to forget about party companions, so it's nice to have that physical reminder sitting there at the table."



Given the setting, it's also possible Lulu may provide some much-needed comfort during a tough gaming session. "It's something to snuggle when you're completely terrified or you're left crying because you've lost your soul," says Lillard, while Rehor adds, "At least if you've been buried in a tower made out of dried blood, you can cuddle Lulu."

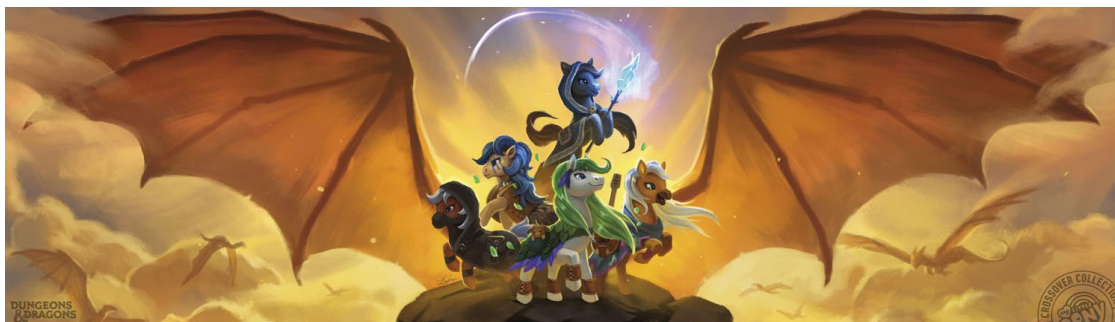
Beadle & Grimm's designers have followed that up with what could be the ultimate Dungeon Master fake out. Any DM dropping this yeti tyke plushy onto the gaming table might expect a chorus of coos from the players. "It's adorable!" they'll say in unison. And then it attacks....



**MSRP: Lulu plushy (\$20); Yeti Tyke plushy (\$20)**

# CUTIE MARKS & DRAGONS

“We wanted to create a band of good friends out on an adventure,” says Designer Katie Smith, who helped guide a collaboration between My Little Pony and Dungeons & Dragons. “We realized that both fandoms have very strong roots in one key kind of magic: friendship!”



The *My Little Pony x Dungeons & Dragons Crossover Collection* gave each member of the equestrian adventuring party their own individual personality, bringing together wizard Mysteria, rogue Shadow Star, bard Spinner Talltail, druid Woodheart the Kind, and barbarian Valor Stronghoof. In true D&D character-building fashion, everything from the names of the ponies, the accessories they come with, and the story of how they relate to each other was carefully considered.

“Emi Tanji on the D&D Team was a huge help when it came to deciding which classes would be a good fit to create a balanced party. She gave me a guide for each class, and I had a blast creating pony-style gear for them. That included what items they would be carrying, the kind of fabric and armor they would wear, and how they would wear them. I also spent time thinking about their personalities and deciding what colors they would be. Working together with Emi was like creating five characters at once for a cross-continental D&D campaign!” Smith tells *Dragon+*.



(Select to view)

“Building character backgrounds is a part of what makes D&D so much fun to play, so it was fitting to incorporate that aspect into the creation of these characters. For example, our wizard Mysteria has a saddle bag with a *bag of holding* on one side and a *bag of devouring* on the other—ponified versions, of course! I was imagining Shadow Star, the rogue, might keep trying to steal from Mysteria and that lead to us giving the wizard one of each type, giving Shadow a fifty/fifty shot of being successful or being sucked into the bag’s void.”

The *Cutie Marks & Dragons* collection didn’t stop at creating fantastically designed mashup figures. It also features two staple D&D accessories: a Dungeon Master’s screen, and a pink, glittery, oversized d20.



Nostalgia also came into play, in reference to the *My Little Pony* and D&D cartoons that both aired in the '80s.

“All of our *MLP* crossover collections have a small ‘stamp of approval’ on the side of the package. For this pack a special unicorn from the D&D '80s cartoon has given us their ‘hoof’ of approval.”

**MSRP: Cutie Marks & Dragons (\$59.99)**

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## FOR FANS BY FANS OWLBEAR PLUSH

It’s time to choose your random character secret for the *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* adventure. You roll “Owlbear Whisperer”. Then roll your eyes. “Owlbears are predisposed to like me,” you say with a sneer, “but I wanted to be a pirate cannibal! Or raised by a yeti!”



And then you meet your first owlbear and it has the impossible-to-resist charisma of For Fans By Fans' plush. In the deathly cold grip of winter, it's the answer to your warm, snuggly needs. And the next time you introduce yourself to someone, you say, "Hi there, I'm an owlbear whisperer."

**MSRP: Owlbear Plush (\$18)**

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## WIZKIDS PREMIUM SCENERY

Whether you're exploring the ruins of a long-forgotten tower along the Sword Coast or stumbling into the domain of an eccentric wizard, towers are the archetypical location for adventure. And WizKids' new tower set piece can help you elevate your game to the next level

and bring a sense of immersion to every player at the table.

With its modular design and easily removable layers, you can customize its appearance to meet any play experience—windows, buttresses, stairs, and floors are all removable, and it can be split into three levels for ease of play. Double-sided floor tiles also allow the option to play with gridded and non-gridded terrain.



Each section is eight-inches in diameter and 100 mm tall so it's big enough to fit your entire adventuring party, with room to spare for any foes! The one-inch walkways and staircases are also designed to easily place your character figures.

Dungeons & Dragons Icons of the Realms: The Yawning Portal Inn is also currently in production at WizKids, and is available for pre-order ahead of its release in April 2021 at a price of \$349.99.

**MSRP: D&D Icons of the Realms: The Tower (\$249.99), D&D Icons of the Realms: The Yawning Portal Inn (\$349.99)**



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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# D&D CAMPAIGNS & SOURCEBOOKS

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## CORE RULEBOOK GIFT SET



What better gift to pass on to new gamers than the three core Dungeons & Dragons rulebooks? This boxed set includes a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, as well as a DM's Screen—it's everything you need to create and play adventures of your own in the world's greatest roleplaying game!



Need a refresh on your well-worn copies? Have a friend who is itching to get into the game? Love the special foil cover editions, all collected in a stylish slipcase? It's the perfect present for any D&D fan.

**MSRP: D&D Core Rulebook Gift Set (\$169.95)**

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS BOXED SETS

Ready for adventure? These handsome sets provide everything you need to take your first steps on epic fantasy journeys!



The *D&D Starter Set* is your gateway to action-packed stories of the imagination. This boxed set contains rules of the game, plus five pregenerated character sheets, and a set of dice. Open it up and get ready to play heroic characters undertaking perilous adventures in worlds of fantasy.

The *D&D Essentials Kit* contains a newly designed rulebook teaching you how to make great characters, the included adventure *Dragon of Icespire Peak*, and introduces a new 1-on-1 rules variant. It's everything you need to run a D&D game with one Dungeon Master and from one to five adventurers.

**MSRP: *D&D Starter Set* (\$19.99), *D&D Essentials Kit* (\$24.99)**



## TASHA'S CAULDRON OF EVERYTHING



(Select to view)

We could fill the pages of this issue of *Dragon+* with the huge number of new rules contained within *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*. A magical mixture of new subclasses, options, and more

are available for players and Dungeon Masters (and we [dig into that detail here](#)). Yet one of our favorite parts of the book are the puzzles designed to entertain and delight your players.



“Puzzles have always been an element in D&D. Some DMs are great at coming up with them, and some have a challenging time creating engaging puzzles. With that in mind, we’ve created ready-to-go puzzles that can be dropped into almost any adventure. These are designed to give your players a change of pace by presenting a new type of problem that needs to be solved with a different type of teamwork. To pull this off, we partnered with [Elisa Teague](#), who

is an amazing puzzle designer,” project lead Jeremy Crawford tells *Dragon+*.

Thirteen puzzles have been included in Tasha’s upcoming tome, catering to a variety of different environments. These can be dropped into an adventure as written or easily adapted to suit any game.

“It’s better if a puzzle can fit seamlessly into the story you’re telling. It shouldn’t feel jarring or take the players out of the game, so we included advice on how to adjust our puzzles to fit any scenario you want,” Elisa Teague advises.



(Select to view)

“We might have a puzzle that uses books on a bookshelf but there’s no reason that same puzzle couldn’t use rocks in the field, chiseled with the relevant symbols. We also talk about how to adjust the puzzle for experience, difficulty, and to make it part of your world. It’s a great way for DMs to see a breakdown of how puzzles are written and get them thinking.”

*Dragon+* managed to sneak into Tasha’s abode while she was off questing (with a little help from Teague) and ladle a couple of puzzles out of her cauldron exclusively for our readers. We’ve already presented the first, which **can be found here**; and now in Issue #35, the second can be downloaded using the link below! It festively features a number of gold rings.

**DOWNLOAD A FREE BONUS PUZZLE!**



(Select to view)

**MSRP: Tasha's Cauldron of Everything (\$49.95)**

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## CURSE OF STRAHD REVAMPED

“If you’re going to make a box for *Curse of Strahd*, it has to be a coffin,” says D&D Lead Story Designer Chris Perkins, who took charge of this beloved, classic adventure’s entry into fifth edition.

We couldn’t agree more and one of our favorite things about the new collector’s edition is the image of Strahd that’s uncovered upon opening that coffin. It’s as if you’ve caught the ruler of Barovia napping.

Can we suggest it’s a good rule of thumb to let sleeping vampires lie? Well, at least the cleric let you argue your case before attacking...

The artist who captured Strahd’s resting form is **Daarken** (also known as Mike Lim), and he tells *Dragon+* what it was like to bring the vampire aristocrat to, um, unlife.



(Select to view)

### This isn't the first time you've captured Strahd's image for D&D. How did it compare to your previous portrait?

I based my original illustration of Strahd entirely on one sketch by Richard Whitters. The face in Richard's version is very stylized, so it was hard finding that balance between staying true to those proportions while still creating a more realistic painting. His face is mainly in shadow in my original portrait, so I didn't have to worry too much about creating a very detailed face.

Strahd's face was going to be more visible in *Curse of Strahd Revamped* so it needed to hold up against additional scrutiny. It was similar to when I painted **Sarkhan Vol** and then **Sarkhan, the Dragonspeaker** for *Magic: The Gathering*. Several years had passed between the two illustrations and I think when you improve artistically you naturally want to create a better version. It's like a second chance.

### Did this unusual, coffin-shaped canvas present a challenge?

It's a really cool idea but I wasn't sure if I should zoom in on Strahd

and only paint half of his body. My art director decided they wanted the full figure, which meant a lot of the negative space around Strahd would be filled using drapery. It's difficult to create that amount of folds from your imagination so I ended up looking at a lot of messy beds. Then I received word that there needed to be dirt inside his coffin, which actually helped because I didn't have to paint quite as many folds.



(Select to view)

### **How much did you personally know about Strahd before first drawing him?**

I knew about Strahd from the '80s AD&D *Ravenloft* module and also from the *Ravenloft* video game by SSI. I didn't play D&D per se, it was more as if I was collecting the books, minis, novels, and cards.

### **What's the trick to successfully capturing this suave, dangerous, yet ultimately tragic character?**

What helped were his hands. A lot of people underestimate the importance of depicting emotions in hands, but I love painting them. Strahd's resting, but his hands are still a little tense. He isn't completely vulnerable while taking a nap, he could still cut you in half in the blink of an eye.

**MSRP: *Curse of Strahd Revamped* (\$99.99)**

## CURSE OF STRAHD LEGENDARY EDITION

Beadle & Grimm’s fantastical D&D boxes never fail to amaze. Stacked with goodies, their unique items take the immersion of an adventure to the next level—and the company’s first *Legendary Edition*, further ennobling *Curse of Strahd*, is no exception.

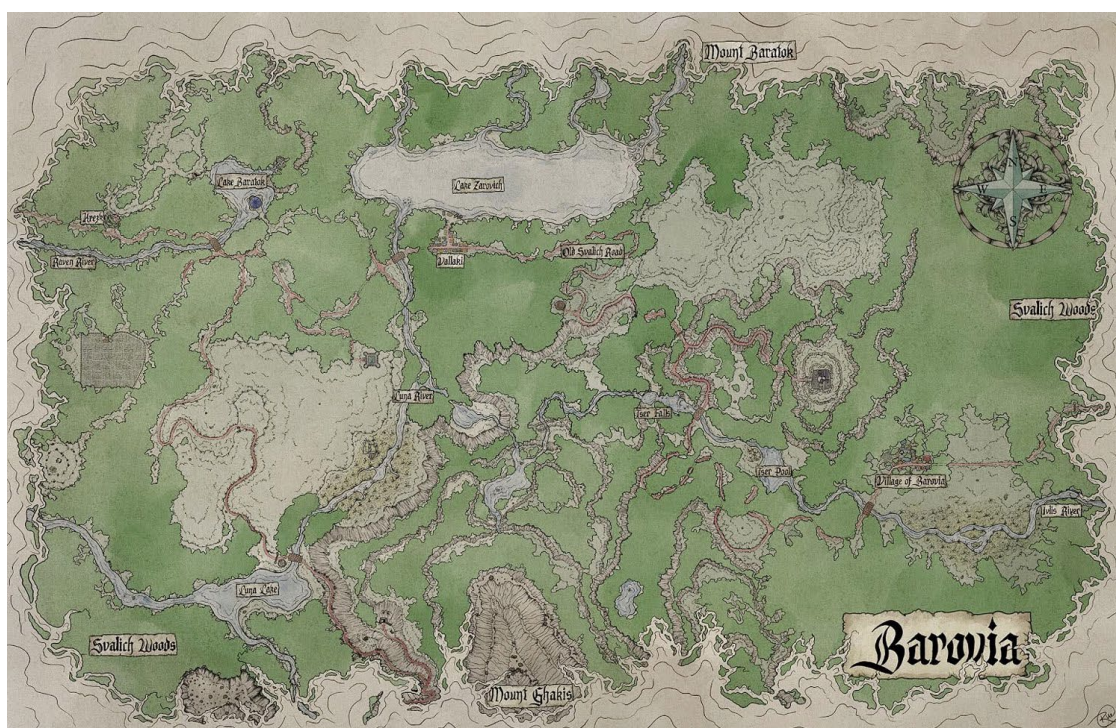


Jack Badashki

them chop out the chunks they needed,” explains **artist Jack Badashski**.

While **Sidharth Chaturvedi’s DM screen** paints an incredible battle scene, and **hilarious finger puppets** add a touch of Blinsky creativity, one of this boxes most impressive feats is detailing every nook and cranny of Castle Ravenloft in the most comprehensive set of maps you’ll find of that structure.

“The Beadle & Grimm’s crew likes going big. Their boxes would be ten times the size they already are if physics and budgets didn’t get in the way. When we discussed the print size we could fit in the box, I decided that to make things easier I would just draw the whole castle and then let



(Select to view)

“I figured I would use the rest of the maps personally. But when I pitched that idea to Charlie Rehor and Matt Lillard, they decided they had to have every square inch of it for their *Legendary Edition*!”

When Badashski says he’s mapped out “the whole darn castle”, he’s not kidding. Running from the lowest crypt to the tower tip, his tactical, scale maps are ready for your miniatures. That includes an aerial view of the entire castle grounds spanning across nine 24in x 30in prints, which can be used singularly or combined into a massive battlefield if you have the space.

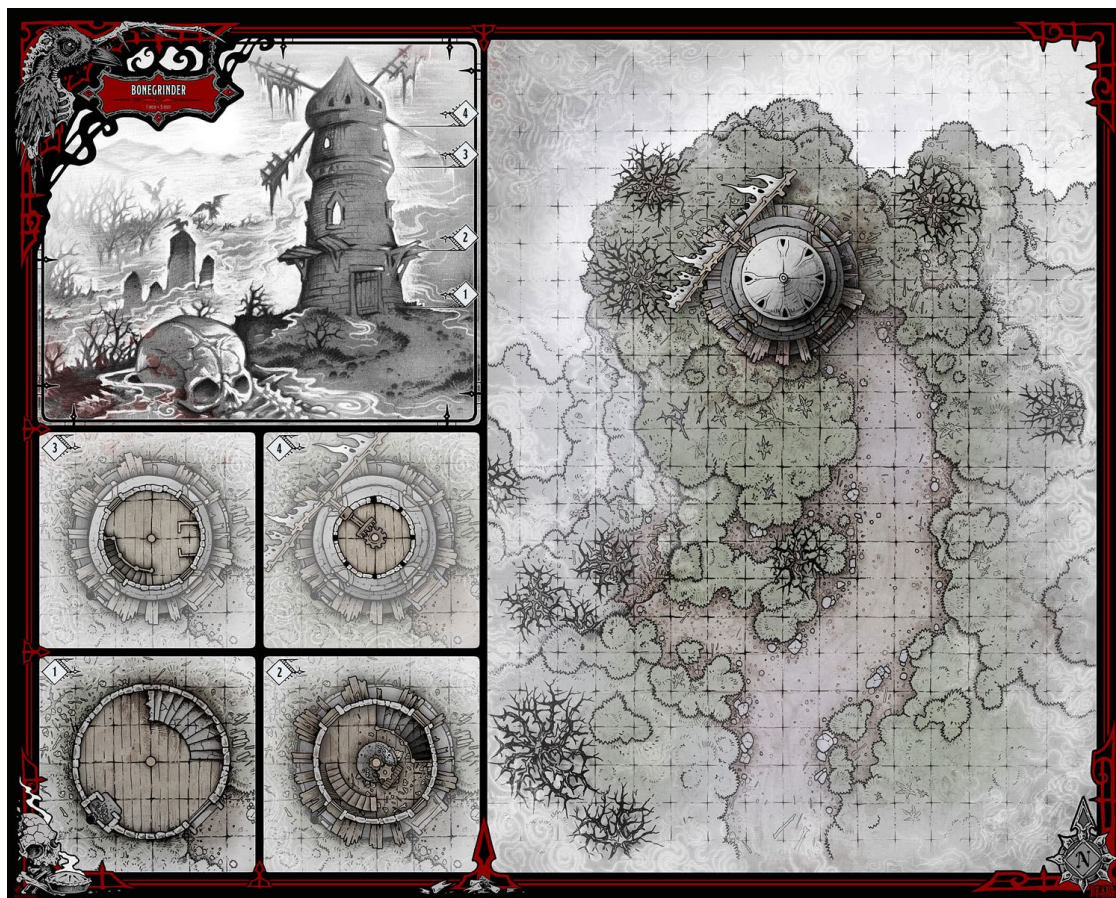


“Naturally, we’ve created the crypts beneath the castle, all the way down to Strahd’s tomb. Those subterranean maps include areas of solid earth not tunneled out for crypts and we’ve filled those spaces with horrific illustrations and other accents to help set the proper mood around the gaming table,” he says with a grin, adding that gothic horror is his natural element and his connection to Castle Ravenloft dates all the way back to his childhood.

“My very first glimpse into Ravenloft comes down to two publications back in the 1990s: *Feast of Goblins*, and *Ship of Horror* from second edition. They came to me tucked between a few *Dragonlance* books and *Dragon* magazines, as part of a used collection I’d acquired. It was love at first glance when I saw that cover art.”

Badashski professes the same love for the work he’s created for the

*Curse of Strahd Legendary Edition*, even if it did take a few months of long days and late nights to draw the bulk of the maps.



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“This has been the biggest map project I’ve battled yet. But when a party of goblin-kin slaps down a sack of gold and bestows the honor of crawling through castle Ravenloft upon you, you don’t worry about how big the maps are going to be, you armor up, pack some torches, and equip your quills!” he says.

“The project was so huge that I needed to gather my own party of goblins. I enlisted the help of Joe and Heather from **Stinky Goblin**, as the three of us regularly collaborate under the SG banner. The notion of a crew of goblin folk from Milwaukee doing the bidding of boss goblins on the West Coast who plot with Wizards of the Coast felt like a conjunction of some kind.”

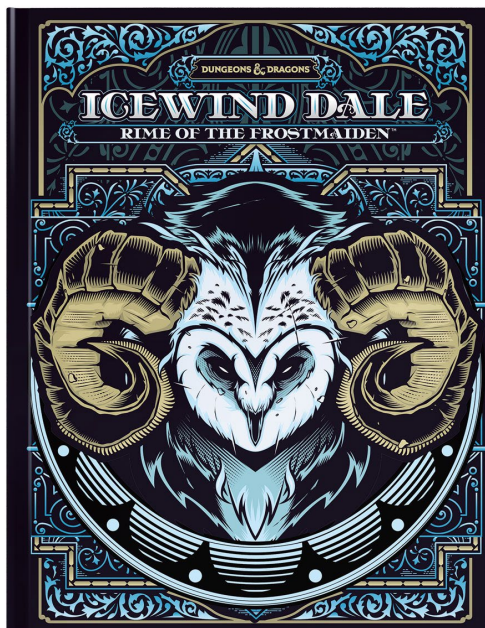


**MSRP: *Curse of Strahd* Legendary Edition (\$399)**

## ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

The D&D Team’s major new storyline for 2020 tells a tale of dark terror that revisits the forlorn, flickering candlelight of a civilization known as Ten-Towns and sheds light on the many bone-chilling locations that surround these frontier settlements. Codenamed “Avalanche” before being announced, that word turned out to be the perfect description for the peril that has descended upon the region. Auril, the merciless god of cold and winter (also known as the Frostmaiden), has cast a spell so powerful it essentially prevents the sun from rising, plunging the already inhospitable location into everlasting winter.

“One of the greatest things about the art in *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* is that the mood of the story is conveyed through it. When you see all the pieces together, they tell our story. Often when we were reviewing final art,



the kinds of comments we had were, ‘The buildings need more icicles,’” Perkins remembers.

“When you’re an artist, there are things you can use to fill spaces and make your composition more interesting to help tell the story,” adds Senior Art Director Kate

Irwin. “Plants are one way to focus things, and we essentially took that tool away from the artists. We were constantly saying, ‘Pile more snow along the edges. And no plants! Everything’s dead, buried under snow’.”

“It’s hard to totally take that out of your toolbox as an artist. And it wasn’t just plants but also other elements such as lighting. We tried to be consistent with the details of the world, which meant being diligent about it never getting any lighter than it would be at evening time. The way you usually make something stand out in an image is to shine light on it. But if it’s always dusk or night, you don’t have that trick to fall back on.”



(Select to view)

The question the team found themselves consistently asking was, where is that light coming from? In some cases, it required creativity at the commissioning stage to make sure artists weren't being painted into a corner, no pun intended. Perkins recalls one case where it even affected the encounter itself.

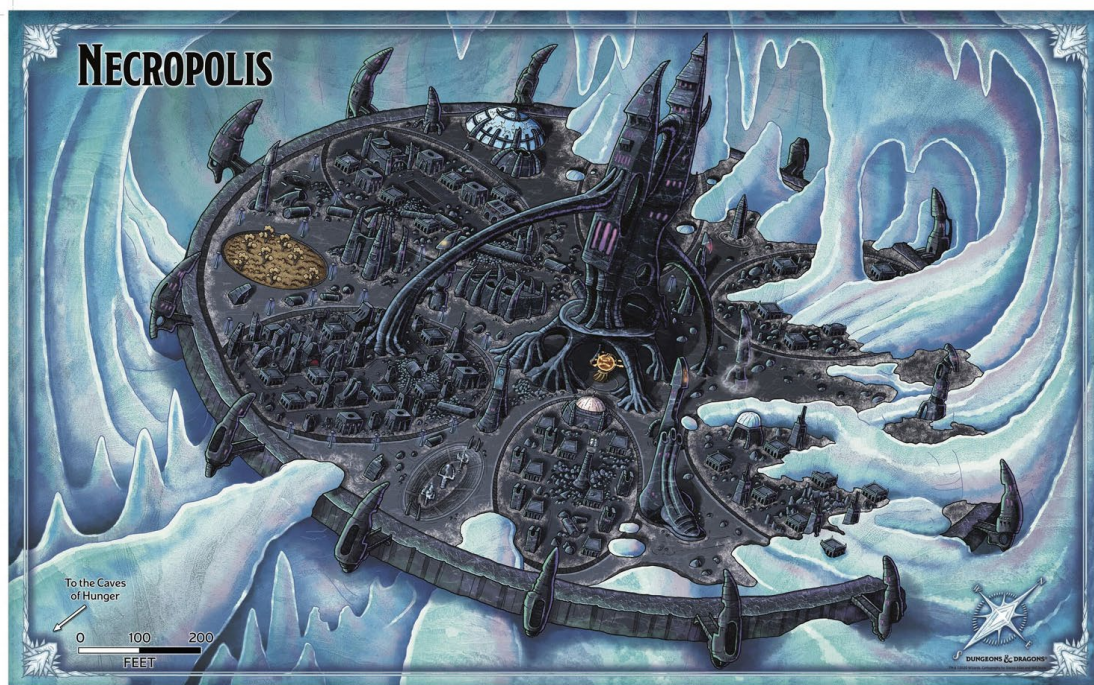
"We were going to include an illustration of a hag in a frozen cave. But as I was writing the description for that encounter, I realized there was no light source and we wouldn't be able to see anything," he says. "I ended up giving the hag a will-o'-wisp companion just so the artist had a light source they could include in the scene."

**MSRP: *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* (\$49.95)**

## ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN SILVER EDITION

A new Dungeons & Dragons storyline means only one thing to the goblins at Beadle & Grimm's Pandemonium Warehouse: a chance to make cool things to enhance that material. With Icewind Dale as its setting and Ten-Towns as a major location for adventuring, "cool"

turned out to be even more literal for *Rime of the Frostmaiden*.



(Select to view)

Icewind Dale gets the poster map treatment from a company's that's already carved out a reputation for its cartography skills, with locations such as Xardorok's mountain fortress and the subterranean Netherese necropolis also benefiting from similar gorgeous reproductions. Yet it's the extra work put into the Ten-Towns setting that may lure DMs back time and time again.

"The individual maps of Ten-Towns and all of the original in-world handouts are one of the most popular features of this box. There's one map and one handout for each of the Ten-Towns," Paul Shapiro says. "Exclusively written and designed for the B&G edition, the handouts highlight each town's unique character and include adventure hooks for those locations. They include everything from broadsheets produced in the larger towns to notes written on scraps of paper that come from the



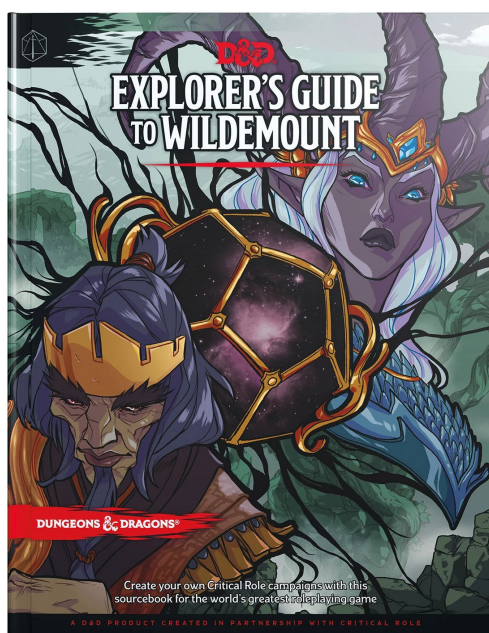
smallest towns.”

Beadle & Grimm’s *Eberron Gold Edition* also set the trend with its *dragonshards*-based bling, creating vibrant, wearable versions of those gems. Fans of R.A Salvatore’s *Drizzt novels* will know that Icewind Dale is littered with a different kind of crystal shards.

“There’s a particular amulet that plays a big part in one of the plotlines of this adventure and we’ve made a wearable version of that,” Shapiro teases. “We’re always trying to find the coolest elements for our boxes that also drive the storyline forward.”

**MSRP: Beadle & Grimm’s *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden Silver Edition* (\$175)**

## EXPLORER’S GUIDE TO WILDEMOUNT



“It’s been a wild experience,” Matt Mercer says when we ask about the continued success of livestream behemoth *Critical Role*. “None of us expected anywhere near this level of attention. It’s equal parts exciting and scary, if that makes any sense. We’re really thankful for the opportunities and are carefully taking each step.

“I hope this doesn’t ever seem like a normal thing for us. I really don’t. We understand and respect the amount of good faith people

put into us to do the things we do, and there’s a very strong sense of responsibility. But everyone who helped on *Explorer’s Guide to Wildemount* has done an incredible job.”



(Select to view)

No one can accuse the *Explorer's Guide* of skimping on content, with 304 pages cataloguing everything from Wildemount's creation myth to its geography, while also profiling its deities, races, subclasses, creatures, unique spells, and artifacts. Even the most ardent Critter who has devoured every episode of the *Critical Role* livestream will find plenty to surprise them.

**MSRP: *Explorer's Guide to Wildemount* (\$49.95)**

## MYTHIC ODYSSEYS OF THEROS



Our first exclusive look at **the fifth edition world of Theros** included

details on new races, subclasses, and gifts from the gods.

Yet new travelers to this region should be aware that there are also plenty of creatures leaving their gigantic footprints all across this *Magic: The Gathering* plane, with one in particular catching our attention. There are krakens (we're partial to the 1981 **Ray Harryhausen** version ourselves) and then there are *krakens*, as noted in the text from *Mythic Odysseys of Theros*:

“Krakens number among the most terrifying denizens of the sea, their wrath capable of ruining entire poleis (or cities, as they’re known in Theros). Under normal circumstances, each kraken is bound by a sea lock, a magical effect that restricts its travel. The area encompassed by the lock is large enough to enable the kraken to feed but prevents these near-immortal beings from raiding densely populated regions. Some stories claim that a seaquake or other natural disaster might break a sea lock and free the kraken to rage as it pleases. Other tales, though, suggest that sea locks emanate from ancient coral weapons buried in the ocean depths that keep a kraken tied within a few hundred miles.



(Select to view)

“The largest and most devastating krakens, nadir krakens, dwell in the deepest ocean trenches. These krakens are unique beings, of which the terrifying **Tromokratis** numbers among the most feared.

When a nadir kraken breaks free of its sea lock and rises to the surface, continents are redrawn, civilizations collapse, and eras end.”



If that’s wetted your appetite (pun totally intended) you’ll find plenty more big beasts to battle in *Mythic Odysseys of Theros*.

**MSRP: Mythic Odysseys of Theros (\$49.95)**



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# EIGHT RINGS

*Difficulty: Medium*

Perfect for dungeons and temples, Eight Rings can be used as a barrier to the next section of your story arc, a trap that must be solved to exit a room, or a challenge to gain hidden information or another reward. The goal of the puzzle is to determine the correct placement of eight rings of different materials onto four pillars. Once the correct rings are in place, the characters are rewarded. In this example, the room is sealed until the puzzle is solved.

Before you is an octagonal chamber, at the center of which stands a simple altar. Four slender, six-inch pillars rise vertically from its surface, flanking an open chest. A tapestry hangs on the wall behind the altar. A closed stone door is set into the wall across the room.

When the characters all enter the room, the stone door through which they passed slams shut, sealing the characters within.

## PUZZLE FEATURES

Both the door through which the characters entered the room and the one across the room are made from thick stone and sealed shut. The only way to open them is to place the correct rings on the pillars. The characters see a chest, an altar with small pillars jutting up from it, and a tapestry.

### CHEST

A wooden chest, carved and inlaid in gold filigree, sits open on the altar in the center of the room. Eight rings are arrayed within. Two are made of gold, two of silver, two of copper, and two of stone. All are just wide enough to fit over a pillar. They are the keys to unlocking the doors.

### ALTAR WITH PILLARS

Four pillars (one each of gold, silver, copper, and stone) protrude from the altar and stand 6 inches tall. The pillars all have two grooves, each the width of one ring. The rings are meant to slide onto the pillars to rest in the grooves.

Each pillar is designed to hold two ring types in order to unseal the room. The order in which the rings are placed doesn't matter, but if an incorrect ring is placed on a pillar, the creature that placed the ring takes 1d4 lightning damage.



### TAPESTRY

The tapestry is decorated with images of rings around the border. In the center, the following verse is embroidered:

*“The pillar of silver desires a gold;  
While the pillar of gold hates copper it’s told.  
Not silver but stone surrounds a copper home;  
And a gold ring never belongs on a stone.  
One ring of copper needs a silver ring mate;  
Yet another copper ring does not share that fate.  
A gold ring and stone ring belong as a pair;  
But gold and silver rings a pillar don’t share.  
Identical rings together do not go;  
And the same combination no two pillars know.”*

Distribute the puzzle handout when the characters first examine the tapestry.

## SOLUTION

Eight Rings is a logic puzzle, and if players make a chart or take careful notes, following the rules on the tapestry should lead to the following arrangement:

- Gold pillar: silver and stone rings
- Silver pillar: copper and gold rings
- Copper pillar: gold and stone rings
- Stone pillar: copper and silver rings

## HINT CHECKS

Any character has the option of making these ability checks to receive a hint:

**Intelligence (Arcana) DC 15.** The rings have a magical tie to the room and are drawn to specific pillars. The character gets the feeling that danger comes with taking the rings out of this chamber.

**Intelligence (Investigation) DC 15.** The character realizes that a silver ring cannot go on the silver pillar.

**Intelligence (Investigation) DC 25.** The character determines that after all clues are read, there is only one pillar where a silver ring can have a copper mate.

**Wisdom (Perception) DC 15.** The character notices a piece of parchment at the base of the altar. There is a faint image of a graph or chart on it, but the image is hard to make out.

## CUSTOMIZING THE PUZZLE

Here are some ideas if you want to change the difficulty of the puzzle.

### LOWERING THE DIFFICULTY

Making props for this puzzle not only brings realism to the table but allows the players to have a tactile experience, which makes finding the solution much easier. If you don't have access to physical props, encourage players to make a chart or cut out pieces of paper to represent the rings.

### RAISING THE DIFFICULTY

If a character puts the incorrect combination of rings on a pillar, you might increase the damage of incorrectly placed rings to accommodate the level of the characters.

### DM Tips

- Reward knowledgeable players with low-Intelligence characters with the opportunity to help solve in other ways. Nature or Arcana checks of DC 15 or higher should allow a player to know enough about the metals or magic attached to them to help with the puzzle without conflicting with their character stats. If those checks fail, drop a monster into the room that is carrying a potion with a temporary Intelligence-increase effect.
- Have a party full of treasure seekers? Discourage characters from taking rings out of the room by dropping a monster at their CR level into the room each time they try to do so.

## PUZZLE HANDOUT 1: EIGHT RINGS



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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# D&D APPAREL

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## 80S TEES X DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

In 1983, six youngsters boarded an amusement park ride and got a lot more thrills than they bargained for. Transported to a fantastical realm where a powerful, mono-horned wizard battles a multi-headed dragon god, they were guided by the calm figure of the Dungeon Master as they searched for a way home. Ranger Hank, acrobat Diana, cavalier Eric, thief Sheila, magician Presto, and barbarian Bobby (with unicorn sidekick Uni) left their indelible mark upon the generation of kids who tuned in for three seasons of magical adventures.

“Saturday morning cartoons were a staple in most households in the ’80s. They inspired imaginations and creativity,” says Gary G, Creative Director at 80sTees.com, who designed the T-shirts. “We went heavy on the cartoon tees for the initial launch of our Dungeons & Dragons range as it was one of both mine and our owner Kevin’s favorite shows as a kid.”

Gary wanted to ensure that the 80s Tees x Dungeons & Dragons collection included at least one shirt featuring each main character, while also highlighting a few of the show’s villains. He created flattering poses for every party member, even those who often served as comic relief in the TV series.



“A few of the tees were derived from the classic character model sheets drawn in 1983. They provided a great reference, allowing me to keep the characters ‘on model’ while creating new poses,” he tells *Dragon+*, explaining his heroic designs for the occasionally bumbling wizard Presto and sometimes cowardly cavalier Eric.

“Presto is learning these new powers and wants to be a great magician but is always unsure of himself. He’s often surprised by the outcome of his actions and I think our Presto tee shows that. Eric may not have been born a hero and tries to avoid danger at every turn, but still winds up doing heroic things without knowing it. If you look closely at the shadow on the ground, I drew Eric with a warrior’s helmet and drawn sword to symbolize the hero he could be. It’s subtle and many may not notice it but it’s there!”

80s Tees has already expanded beyond its line of cartoon tees to create the delicious oxymoron that is ‘new’ classic D&D designs.

“We always try to give our products more of a vintage look and there are so many existing images that translate to cool vintage tees—from book covers and internal pages to action-figure packaging from products that were released back in the ’80s. And Warduke was always a favorite of mine as I had his action figure and created my own adventures with him.”

**MSRP: Cavalier T-shirt (\$40.22), Cherry Heather Cartoon Characters T-shirt (\$40.22), D&D Cartoon costume hoodies (\$144.52 each), Expert Rulebook T-shirt (\$40.35), Baldur’s Gate T-shirt (\$42.50), Rolled A One T-shirt (\$42.50), Warduke T-shirt (\$42.50)**

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## FOR FANS BY FANS

Come for the colorful beholder hoodie and stay for the incredible geometric designs! The zipped-up beholder hoodie looks like a Dungeons & Dragons x *Dragon Ball Z* mashup, while the geometric designs take in everything from an owlbear, displacer beast, and black dragon, to *Tomb of Horrors*’ architect Acererak.



**MSRP: Beholder Hoodie (\$65); D&D Iconic Geometry designs (\$25 T-shirt, \$25 tank top, \$50 pullover hoodie)**

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## DEATH SAVES

Actor Joe Manganiello isn't the only D&D celebrity associated with the Death Saves brand. Infamous wizard Kelek was created in the early '80s as part of a roster of known D&D characters and now graces a T-shirt. Meanwhile, Saint Kargoth the Betrayer (or should we say "The King of the Death Knights", printed here in crisp gold metallic ink on a coach jacket) originally appeared in an issue of *Dragon* magazine. And do we even need to introduce infamous lich Vecna or legendary *Dragonlance* wizard Raistlin?

And who doesn't love a beholder, recreated here in all of its ten eye-stalked glory by illustrator Ryan Burgdorfer? Check out the back of that long-sleeve tee to see the array of rays the creature might employ, cleverly incorporating the company name under the "Death" option.



Some of Death Saves' earliest pieces are even gaining a celebrity status of their own.

"I love it when someone shows up online or at an event wearing a shirt or jacket that I know for a fact we only made five, ten, or twenty of, and that's it! I love telling those people about the history and rarity of the piece they are wearing," Joe Manganiello tells *Dragon+*, confirming that his clothing also shows up in some interesting places. "I saw someone on safari in Africa in a rare yellow Comic Con exclusive Death Knight shirt with the sleeves ripped off. Represent!"

And while comfortable footwear might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you picture a fantasy/heavy metal streetwear brand, Death Saves slippers are the mashup 2020 demanded!

**MSRP: D&D Kelek SS T-shirt (\$35); Raistlin T-shirt (\$35), Vecna, Whispered One glow-in-the-dark T-shirt (\$35), Death Knight coach jacket, Gold (\$75), D&D Beholder Redux LS T-shirt (\$42), Death Saves slippers (\$38)**

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## WILD BANGARANG D&D CLOTHING

When we last spoke to Adam Jay, CEO and Founder at Wild Bangarang, he was excited to launch the company's first D&D products and was already looking ahead to what the future might hold: "Dungeons & Dragons has so much content and the accompanying material the D&D Team provides helps us decide which route to take—be it class, race, or monsters. We'll add further styles to our leggings and skirts, and plan to diversify into jerseys, shorts, swimwear, and fitness wear."



Since then, Wild Bangarang's range has exploded, now available in sizes XXS-3XL, and inclusive of leggings, skirts, skater dresses, and basketball shorts.

**MSRP: Wild Bangarang D&D Collection (£35/\$46.75 leggings, £15/\$20 snood, £42/\$56 leggings and snood bundle, £25/\$33.35 mini skirt, £32.50/\$43.40 pencil skirt, £40/\$53.40 skater dress, £25/\$33.35 basketball shorts, £40/\$53.40 jersey)**

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## D&D BEANIE

Mind flayers are on the rise as video game *Baldur's Gate III* prepares for full release (play the **Early Access beta now**). While this ultra-soft beanie won't protect against tendrils seeking purchase in your brain, it will keep you warm and make you look great while it's happening. Better yet, the 58cm marled knit beanie easily fits most head sizes, so you won't have to attune to it to get it to fit your dome.



**MSRP: D&D beanie (\$14.99)**

# HEROES AND VILLAINS COLLECTION

Why in a year when we spent so much time on our couch did it take us this long to find amazing D&D-themed lounge wear?! We could have been stylishly dressed even when we weren't able to entertain.

The **Heroes and Villains D&D collection** goes well beyond pants and socks that'll never be seen on that Zoom call, including hats, T-shirts, shirts, and jackets that you'd be very happy to share with your friends and coworkers on a livestream.



**MSRP: D&D Dragon loungewear (\$30), Volo's Guide to Monsters snap back (\$28), Tossed Dice shirt (\$68), D&D socks (\$32), I Cast Magic Missile T-shirt (\$30), Volo's Guide T-shirt (\$30), Fortune Favors the Bold T-shirt (\$48), Warduke Evil**

**Fighter (\$30 T-shirt, \$90 jacket)**

## BEADLE & GRIMM'S APPAREL

Did you know Beadle & Grimm's also makes T-shirts tied into its major D&D releases? Our favorite being the *Descent into Avernus* shirt declaring your membership of the 8th Infantry Legion, which has been campaigning in the Nine Hells' Blood War "since the beginning". Someone needs to give that crew a well-deserved break!



**MSRP: Beadle & Grimm's T-shirts (\$25 each)**

## D&D T-SHIRTS



A multitude of officially licensed D&D T-shirt styles await you on the Amazon website. From one-eyed creatures and clever character class designs, to weapons-grade ampersand symbols and illithids spoiling for a fight, there's something for everyone. But in this moment of Zen, we're only going to show you a calming image of the Demogorgon on their summer holidays, so you'll need to [click](#)

[this link](#) to goggle your eyes at the rest.

**MSRP: Demogorgon Silhouette premium T-shirt (\$24.99)**

# UK EXCLUSIVE: ZAVVI D&D APPAREL

This **new D&D collection** from our friends at Zavvi.com promises the chance to treat yourself and your loved ones this holiday season if you live in the UK. An extensive range of tees and hoodies is ready to have its wrapping torn off to bring smiles to faces.



**MSRP: Cartoon Tiamat T-Shirt (£14.99), Beholder Dreams of Total Domination T-shirt (£14.99), Beholder T-shirt (£14.99), Rogue men's T-Shirt (£14.99), *Monster Manual* hoodie (£29.99)**



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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# HOME & LIFESTYLE

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## DRINKING UTENSILS

True gifting gurus know that commonplace items with an added touch of D&D pizzazz make excellent presents, as they help raise a smile when they're used on an everyday basis.

With that in mind, there are some amazing options available for those frequent moments when you need to hydrate. Cold drinks automatically gain a point of Charisma when served in these pint glasses based on the D&D core rulebooks: choose between Lich's Blight Dark Ale, Fire Giant Furious Brew, or Beholder's Charm Lager—or purchase the whole set at a reduced price!

For Fans By Fans' cartoony Cold Cup also makes for a handsome beverage holder, as does Merchoid's tankard of mana restoration.

If a *confusion* spell has you unsure if you'll be drinking hot or cold drinks, it's best to get a receptacle that can handle both. Tervis' stainless steel tumblers come in two flavors: 16oz with a travel lid; or 20oz with a slider lid.

Hot drinks are also well catered for, with mugs aplenty. There's the d12-shaped mug that's perfect for the libation-loving barbarian in your life, a heat-change mug that reveals a beholder when the liquid is hot, and even **a few UK exclusives** for Brits to savor.



**MSRP: D&D Core Rulebooks pint glasses (\$10 each, \$25 three-glass bundle), D&D Cold Cup (\$15.00), Restore Mana tankard (\$52.99), Tervis stainless steel tumbler (\$16.99 16oz, \$29.99 20oz), d12 mug (\$16.99), D&D Heat Change mug (\$14.99), Zavvi.com mugs (£7.99/\$10.65 each)**

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## d20 UMBRELLA

This automatic spring-action umbrella opens to a 34in canopy, but its compact folded size means you won't need a bag of *holding* to carry it.



**MSRP: Dice Umbrella (\$34.99)**

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## COIN PURSE

It doesn't matter if your lifestyle's finances stretch from wretched to aristocratic, carrying your cash never felt cooler!

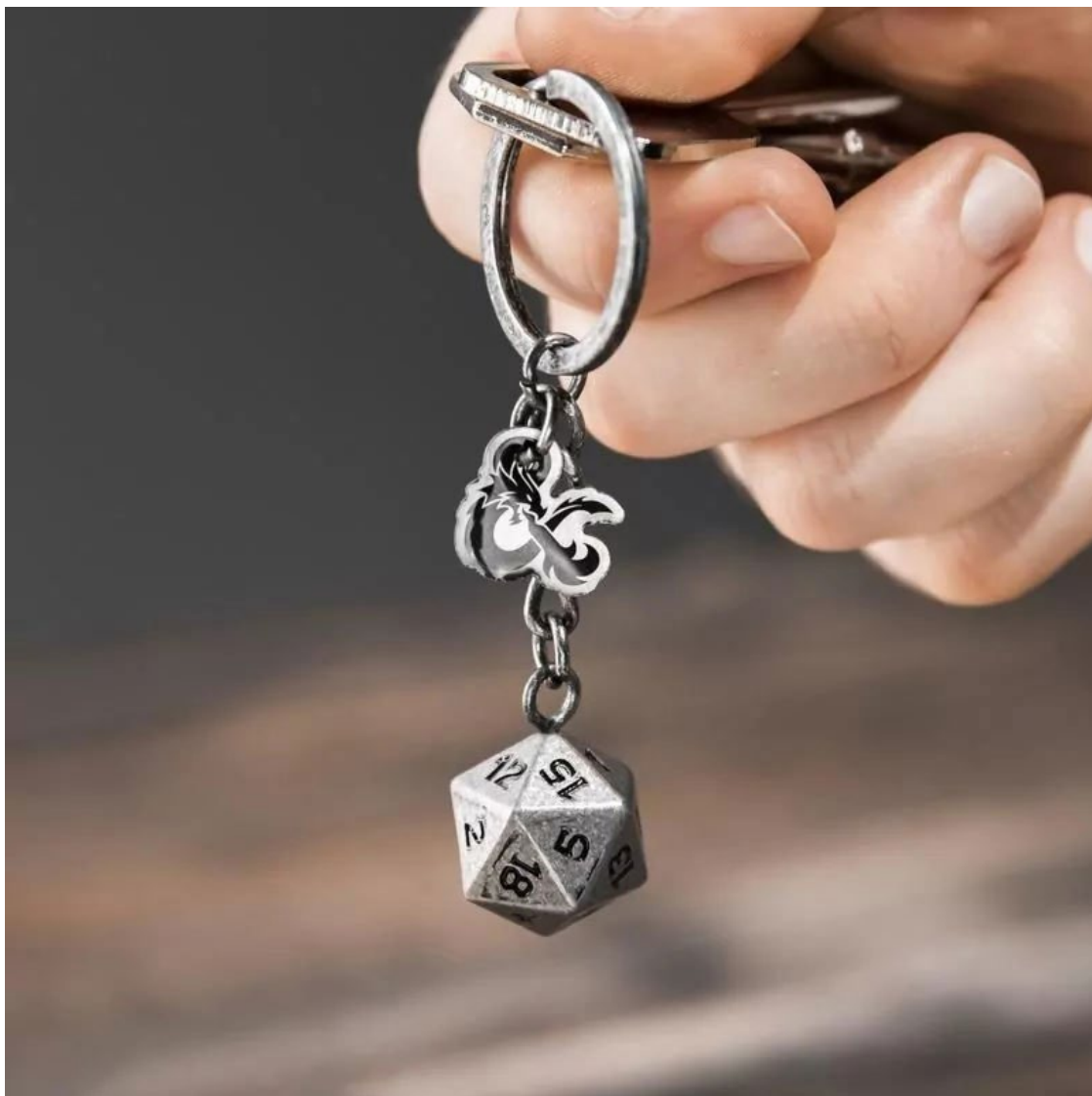


**MSRP: Hot Topic coin purse (\$12.90)**

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## d20 KEYRING

Whether you're wrangling your house keys to avoid casting *knock* (again!) or attaching this keyring to a zip to make it easier to open, that d20 proudly displays your love for D&D.



**MSRP: D&D d20 keyring (\$9.99)**

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## D&D HOME GOODS COLLECTION

Update the look and feel of any bed, couch or lounge area with **this new home collection for Dungeons & Dragons!** The image of a barbarian in mid-flight about to attack a fire giant is incredible when displayed across a canvas as large as a throw blanket, as is the classic *D&D Red Box Starter Set*.



**MSRP: D&D Digital Art Print throw blanket (\$29.99), *D&D Red Box Starter Set* throw blanket (\$29.99)**

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## USB DESK LIGHT

Set the scene for your next game night with this color changing mood lamp. With a glow that switches from white to yellow to orange to lilac to turquoise, it reinvents itself more often than a bard changes their appearance.



**MSRP: d20 Color Changing Light (\$34.99)**

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## PEN HOLDER

You could hollow out the skulls of your defeated enemies and use them to store your writing implements. Or you could buy this pen holder and ensure it's not only necromancers who like to hang out near your desk.



**MSRP: Heroes and Villains ceramic pen holder (\$14)**

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## DRAGON BACKPACK AND UK EXCLUSIVE ZAVVI TOTE BAGS

Whether you're carrying the rulebooks, the figures, the scenery, the dice tower or—and we can't stress the importance of these enough—the snacks, there's no reason not to do it in style.

The Red Dragon Backpack stands 16in tall and is big enough to house a laptop in its dedicated interior pocket. Meanwhile, these stylish tote bags (exclusive to UK gamers courtesy of Zavvi.com) are hardy enough to house several adventure sourcebooks and still handle the necessary snacks.



You're bringing snacks, right?!

**MSRP: Red Dragon Backpack (\$59.99), Zavvi.com tote bags (£7.99/\$10.65 each)**

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## PIGGY BANK

It may resemble a weighty tome explaining how to deal with troublesome gnolls, but if you fill this savings bank you'll be taking a big step towards doing all those things you promised you'd do when the world rotates back to some kind of normal in 2021.



**MSRP: Adventure Fund Savings Bank (\$12.50)**



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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# CARD/BOARD GAMES

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## ADVENTURE BEGINS

Kids are masters of storytelling. They battle monsters under the kitchen table, see the garden as a fantastical labyrinth, and play ghoulish gatekeeper to the treasures under the bed. They're ideal D&D party members. The board game *Adventure Begins* aims to pique the interest of those still young enough to see dragons in the shadows on their bedroom walls by ingeniously condensing the key elements of fifth edition D&D into a game that's easy to setup and quick to play.



“There’s a huge audience of parents who love D&D, and they’re looking for ways to play with their seven, eight, nine, and ten-year-olds,” says Game Designer Allie Jennings. “They were really excited during testing. The game introduces D&D concepts and core tenets at a much-simplified level so that they’re able to play the game they love with all the members of their family.”

*Adventure Begins* is a collaborative journey, which lays out like a tabletop board game. Players take turns to place tiles in a path, like pieces of a puzzle, as they weave stories and overcome challenges. It takes around an hour of gameplay to reach the final showdown, and the monsters, characters, and adventures players experience along the way are all familiar to D&D players.

“Our choice of final monsters are a kraken, fire giant, beholder, and green dragon—because you can’t have D&D without a dragon,” says Brand Writer Jenna Giuffrida. “They all have their own names and storylines, plus their own little minions that you’ll encounter along the way.”



(Select to view)

*Adventure Begins* also allows everyone to try their hand at being the Dungeon Master, albeit it in a modified role. The game can be played with one DM throughout, if very young players aren’t confident readers. But if everyone takes a turn at being the DM, Giuffrida says they usually discover that they love it.

“Being Dungeon Master can seem like a lot of responsibility, so we split it up and let every player have a chance to be the DM, taking turns. When you’re the DM, you get to be the monster and roll the dice for it. You also get to know all the secret information that the other players don’t know yet,” she says.

“The kids really latched onto that, because being DM allows them to be storytellers. They can be as creative as they want to in this game, and it’s also structured so it doesn’t *require* them to be creative at all. If players prefer simply to battle the monsters, they can play that way too and still have a fun time.”

**MSRP: *Adventure Begins* board game (\$24.95)**

## CLUE: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

You won't find candlesticks, drawing rooms, or characters named after their colored markers in this version of the classic whodunnit board game. Instead, you'll be asking if it was Lulu in the Dungeon of the Dead with the mastercraft scimitar? Or Falaster in Vanthampur Villa with the silverclaw?

In *Clue: Dungeons & Dragons* an *infernal puzzle box*, delivered by a Hellrider of Elturel, has been stolen from the party of adventurers. Determined to reclaim their box of infernal secrets, one of Zariel's minions has slain and secretly replaced an adventurer, unbeknownst to the rest of the party members!

In the grand tradition of *Clue*, the heroes must try to figure out who has been replaced by a devil in disguise, which weapon was used in the execution, and where in the Forgotten Realms the *infernal puzzle box* is hidden.



(Select to view)

The six suspects are Minsc and Boo, Falaster Fisk, Lulu the hollyphant, Sylvira Savikas, Reya Mantlemorn, and Slobberchops. But which one of them is the devil? The game also includes six pewter tokens representing weapons from the game, including a greatsword, a *horn of blasting*, a demon longbow, and a *censor of remembrance*.

**MSRP: *Clue: Dungeons & Dragons* (\$39.99)**

## DUNGEON MAYHEM



The dungeon's been cleared, the bad guys are down, and the bickering begins. The paladin's convinced that the rogue is stealing all the best loot. The wizard makes a snide remark about the barbarian's IQ. Harsh words are spoken. Swords are drawn. Spells cast. Oh, it's on!

*Dungeon Mayhem* is a pocket-sized card game of feuding heroes that's as fast as it is fun. The brainchild of Jordan Comar and Roscoe Wetlaufer, it sees two to four players battling to be the last hero standing in a frenzy of sword-swinging, spell-slinging card combat that'll appeal to

seasoned adventurers and D&D newcomers alike.

"With *Dungeon Mayhem*, we wanted to create a light, quick and super-fun party game that could give the uninitiated a taste of D&D and inspire them to come back for a full course meal, so to speak," says Wetlaufer.

"The game says '8+' on the box and that's not an exaggeration," adds Comar. "The core mechanics revolve around simple iconography,

allowing even younger players to gain familiarity with it during the first round.”

Since the action-packed card game was released with four characters (barbarian, paladin, rogue, and wizard) there have been two expansions (adding ranger Minsc and his miniature, giant space hamster Boo, and the shapeshifting druid Jaheira, as well as six epic D&D monsters to play!). The box for *Dungeon Mayhem: Monster Madness* is also large enough to store all twelve character decks. Handy!

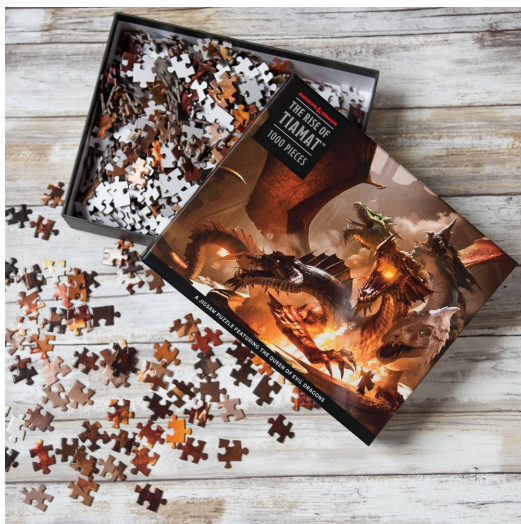


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**MSRP: *Dungeon Mayhem* (\$15.00); *Dungeon Mayhem: Battle for Baldur's Gate* (\$9.99); *Dungeon Mayhem: Monster Madness* (\$24.99)**

## RISE OF TIAMAT PUZZLE

Chances of you meeting Tiamat in game and surviving in one piece?

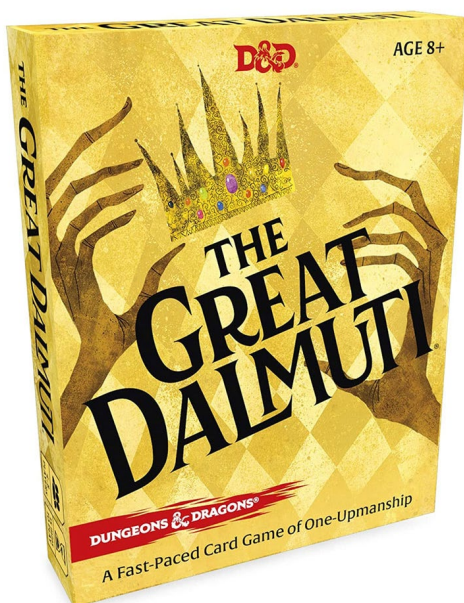


Slim. Chance of you assembling this 1,000-piece puzzle featuring the queen of evil dragons and not being breath-weaponed into oblivion? Much better. We highly recommend option two, even if it is still a monstrous challenge.

**MSRP: Rise of Tiamat Puzzle (\$19.99)**

## THE GREAT DALMUTI: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

When Richard Garfield created *The Great Dalmuti* card game back in 1995, he drew inspiration from further back in history. *Dalmuti* (which sees four-to-eight players trading ranked cards as they attempt to get rid of their hands) is a variant of the game *President* and dates all the way back to the Middle Ages. Aside from a 1998 spinoff based on the comic strip *Dilbert* (titled *Dilbert: Corporate Shuffle*), no-one has updated Garfield's creation since.



On its 25th anniversary this year, the card-swapping, status-changing game extended its long history once again thanks to a version that merges with the rich world of Dungeons & Dragons. **Illustrator Harry Conway**—whose artistic style often plays with the perspective of his characters, elongating them and showing heads and limbs out of proportion—was tasked with updating the artwork for the rerelease. He created a backstory for each character to help bring them to

life. For example, picturing the Breeder as someone with a laborious and frustrating job, as she attempts to raise abyssal chickens.

“I tried to capture the inner expression that these cheeky little monsters know that they’re wrecking her head—and they have no problem in doing so! It’s become a nightmare for the Breeder, but that’s her job, so she has to suck it up and get on with it,” he explains.



(Select to view)

“And I like the idea that the Rat Catcher has an audience. He’s someone that lives his life surrounded by rats and he’s found a way of entertaining himself with their presence. My intention in that scene is to show the sense of disbelief from the rats. They don’t know what the rat catcher has in store for them, so they look bewildered and discombobulated.”

The artist also attempted to answer the question: what’s so “Great” about The Great Dalmuti? His interpretation of that card suggests the

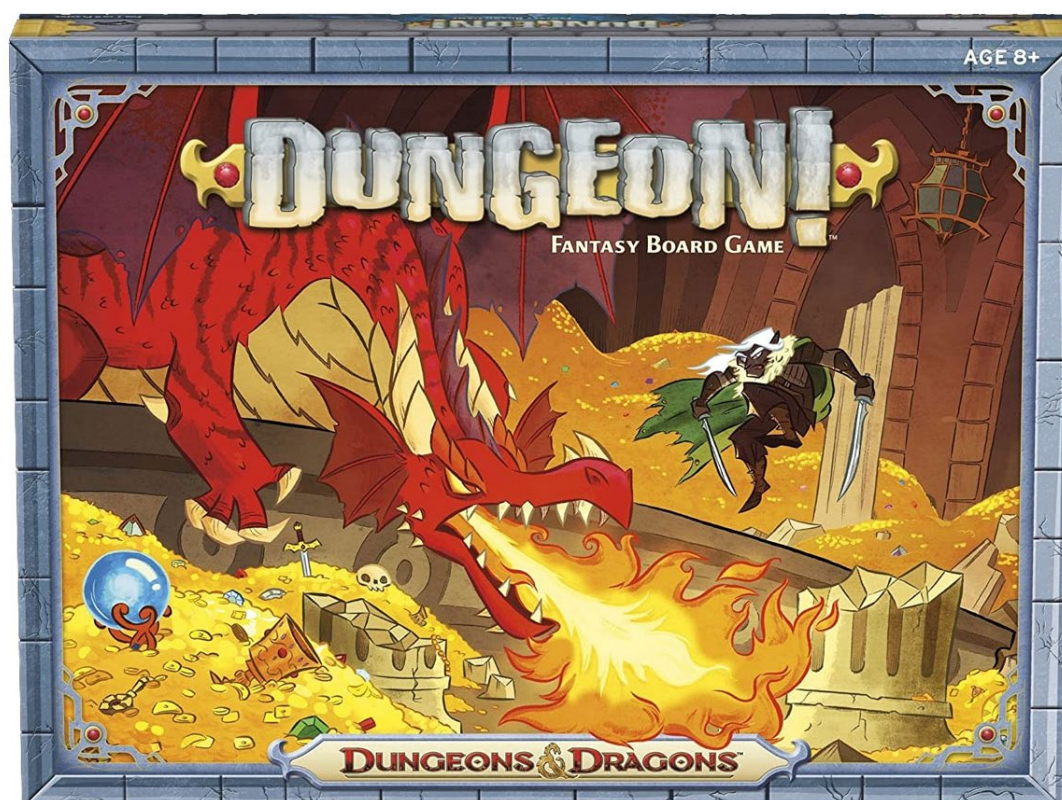
pursuit of the crown has an underlying sinister quality to it.

“I felt it would be like Smeagol with the precious. There’s a desperation in trying to obtain it and it was really important to get that across with this mass of hands reaching out in hope.”

**MSRP: *The Great Dalmuti: Dungeons & Dragons* (\$14.99)**

## DUNGEON!

Go on the hunt for bigger and better treasure in this fast-paced, classic board game. Will you and your friends stick to level one and clear out the goblins and kobolds? Or will you delve deep into level six and set your sights on the purple worm or the red dragon? Along the way, you’ll face off against such iconic monsters as an owlbear, drow, and even the black pudding!



Your goal is simple. Choose a hero (rogue, cleric, fighter, or wizard) and run through the dungeon, fighting monsters, and collecting as many treasures as you can. Be the first to get out alive with enough treasure to win!

**MSRP: *Dungeon!* (\$19.99)**

## BETRAYAL AT BALDUR'S GATE

Brilliant board game *Betrayal at House on the Hill* has been given the epic D&D treatment in *Betrayal at Baldur's Gate*. The shadow of Bhaal has come over Baldur's Gate, summoning monsters and other horrors from the darkness!



Chris Dupuis was the Game Producer at Wizards of the Coast tasked with converting the co-operative horror boardgame into something Dungeons & Dragons fans would revel in.

“In our first design meeting we talked about what makes *Betrayal* a unique and exciting game—elements we would want to capture going forward,” he remembers. “The game had to

have tiles and a sprawling board that grew and changed each time you played. It had to have Omen, Item, and Event cards. We discussed the pros and cons of tweaking character traits to make them more like D&D abilities, but stuck with Might, Speed, Knowledge, and Sanity because of how resonant they are with established *Betrayal* fans.”

As players build the iconic city's dark alleys and deadly catacombs by pulling tiles, they must work with their fellow adventurers to survive the terrors ahead. That is, until some horrific evil turns one player—or possibly more—against their allies. Was it a mind flayer's psionic blast or the whisperings of a deranged ghost that caused them to turn traitor? You'll have no choice but to keep your enemies close!

Check out this **bonus, holiday-themed scenario** for *Betrayal at Baldur's Gate* created exclusively for *Dragon+* readers!

**MSRP: *Betrayal at Baldur's Gate* (\$50)**

## THREE DRAGON ANTE: LEGENDARY EDITION



This casual game of chance for two to six players is fun to play on its own. But add it to your Dungeons & Dragons campaign and it becomes an immersive, in-character tavern game.

Players start with gold in their hoard and place an ante in the middle of the table based on the cards they play. The idea is to make the strongest three-card hand to beat rival players and capture all the coins on the table. There are other ways to win, even with a low card value—for example, making a set of three cards of the same strength or color can net you extra coins or provide the opportunity to draw more cards.

Each card also has a special ability that can trigger based on the card just played by your opponent. These abilities might steal coins, remove cards from your opponents, or more.



(Select to view)

The *Legendary Edition* also adds new legendary dragons, mortals, gold and platinum pieces, as well as using “Ability Disks” to combine *Three-Dragon Ante* with the Dungeons & Dragons tabletop roleplaying game!

**MSRP: *Three-Dragon Ante: Legendary Edition* (\$29.99)**



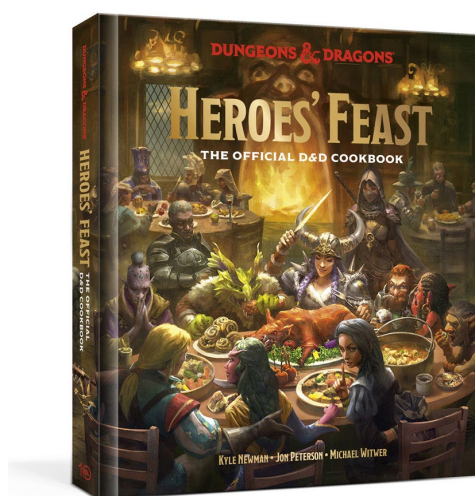
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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020



## NOVELS, BOOKS &amp; COMICS

## HEROES' FEAST COOKBOOK



'Tis the season to be feasting! As luck would have it, Kyle Newman, Jon Peterson, and Michael Witwer have penned the first ever official D&D cookbook full of delicious recipes, just in time for the holiday festivities! Featuring culinary delights from the taverns of Kryn timer to the tunnels of the Underdark, there's a recipe to tantalize the taste buds of every adventurer in your party.

*Heroes Feast* has been written with the same breathtaking depth of knowledge and love that wowed us in the authors' previous work, *Dungeons & Dragons Art & Arcana: A Visual History*. Not only are the dishes presented in mouth-watering photoshoots filled with authentic props from the fantasy realms, every page is also bursting with references to D&D races, traditions, and lore.



“Jon was exploring his library of historic references, trying to find any hint of food or ingredients. Meanwhile, Michael and I spent time rereading books such as *Volo’s Guides* and *Aurora’s Whole Realms Catalog* trying to generate a master list,” Kyle says, explaining how the trio packed in so much, ahem, flavor. “We divided and conquered all of the D&D editions, games, comic books, novels—anything we could find. We wanted to balance the different cultures, planets, and realms being represented by touching on as many elements as we could.”

Working on a cookbook also saw the authors building up a mighty appetite.

“I cooked through nearly the entire book, but saved the Hommlet

golden brown roasted turkey especially for Thanksgiving. I plan to revisit the honeyed ham with pineapple gravy over the holidays, as that's another halfling dish which is really delicious," Witwer says, before Newman lays out his dream holiday spread with an anticipatory smile: "I'll dive into cherrybread in the morning, then prepare the Hommlet golden brown roasted turkey with sausage stuffing and dripping, some of the halfling stuffed egg-battered toast, and maybe a wood elf forest salad to get some greens in there as it's looking a little meat heavy!"



Vegetarians need not fear as the book is truly balanced, although the description of drow mushroom steaks does profess them to be "so tasty and chewy you'll think you're eating a unicorn." "Well, we condone eating halfling too!" Peterson adds with a chuckle,

confirming that the cookbook caters for all alignments. “Our friend Joe Manganiello shared Arkhan the Cruel’s flame-roasted halfling chili, so there is no discrimination, everyone gets to enjoy a heroes’ feast!”

Need something to help wash all that down? Alongside the great selection of snacks, mains, and deserts are a handful of cocktails. Ever wondered what a *potion of restoration* tastes like? Wonder no more!

“The dwarven mulled wine is a perfect seasonal drink,” Witwer suggests, before Peterson adds, “If your holidays are biting cold, the delayed blast fireball will certainly warm up festivities.”

One moment we can all look forward to is being able to gather around the gaming tables we used to regularly share, at which point the book may provide an even greater level of in-game immersion.

“My D&D group has really been inspired,” Michael shares. “Once we can safely get back together, we’re excited to have some dishes on our table that we might encounter in the game itself.”

EXCLUSIVE HEROES’ FEAST RECIPES TO DOWNLOAD:

DWARVEN MULLED WINE

GINGERBREAD MEN

**MSRP: Heroes’ Feast (\$35.00 hardback, \$14.99 Kindle edition)**

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## DAYS OF ENDLESS ADVENTURE D&D COMIC COLLECTION

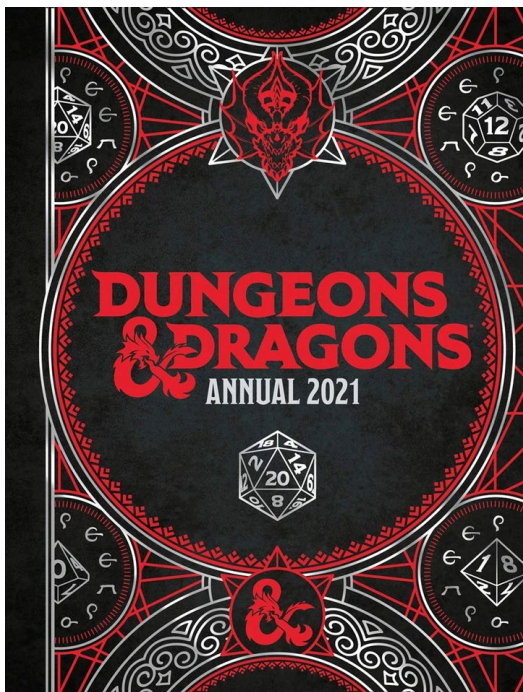
Strap in as a new generation of heroes, led by a revived Minsc and Boo, rises to protect Baldur’s Gate! This graphic novel collection brings together the *Legends of Baldur’s Gate*, *Shadows of the Vampire*, *Frost Giant’s Fury*, and *Evil at Baldur’s Gate* storylines

from IDW's official Dungeons & Dragons comic. Our intrepid duo and their new allies find themselves fighting evil forces throughout the Realms and beyond. Whether they're stopping a plot by the Cult of the Dragon to destroy the city, escaping from the endless night of Ravenloft in the Demiplane of Dread, or facing down frost giant raiding parties in the frigid Spine of the World, the action never stops. Go for the eyes, Boo!



**MSRP: *Dungeons & Dragons: Days of Endless Adventure* (\$29.99 print, \$22.99 digital edition)**

# D&D ANNUAL 2021



“An annual is a yearly, hardcover book usually available in the fourth quarter of the year and often bought as a holiday gift,” says Craig Jelley, Editor of the *Dungeons & Dragons Annual 2021*, as he explains this quintessential part of UK culture. “It provides a retrospective of a subject over the previous twelve months or introduces that subject to new people. Typical examples might include games such as *Minecraft*, fandoms such as *Star Wars*, or sports teams such as Premier League football clubs.

And while annuals are often targeted at younger readers, the *Dungeons & Dragons Annual* will be suitable for fans of all ages.”



(Select to view)

“We have made our text very straightforward and accessible, which

is in keeping with the achievements of the D&D Team with fifth edition in general,” says Writer Susie Rae, adding that she hopes the hardback book will help draw in new D&D players.

“Readers can come to the *D&D Annual 2021* as complete novices and quickly understand what’s going on and enjoy themselves, without needing to know decades’ worth of lore. It’s actually very straightforward either to play or to become a Dungeon Master, and it’s really fun once you give it a try.”



(Select to view)

Filled with tips and tricks, this introduction to D&D is broken up into four core areas: World and Lore, Gameplay, Community, and Activities. That includes epic monsters, heroes, and villains, popular locations, a look at character creation, Dungeon Master tips, and advice on world-building. Even with 96 pages to play with, there’s an awful lot to cram inside its covers.



(Select to view)

“We’ve hopefully picked out everything you need to know to play D&D,” Rae says. “That includes more obvious elements such as how to roll up a character and an explanation of the different races, as well as page spreads looking at different worlds such as Faerûn, Eberron, and Ravenloft.”

**MSRP: *Dungeons & Dragons Annual 2021* (\$14.50 hardcover)**

## ENDLESS QUEST ADVENTURE BOOKS

Become the hero and choose your own fate! The original *Endless Quest* series provided an easy way into D&D when it launched in 1982 and the latest immersive adventures are just as captivating. Written by Matt Forbeck, these six novels follow the adventures of four D&D character classes: *Escape from Castle Ravenloft* and *Into the Jungle* (cleric), *The Mad Mage’s Academy* and *To Catch a Thief* (rogue), *Escape the Underdark* (fighter), and *Big Trouble* (wizard).



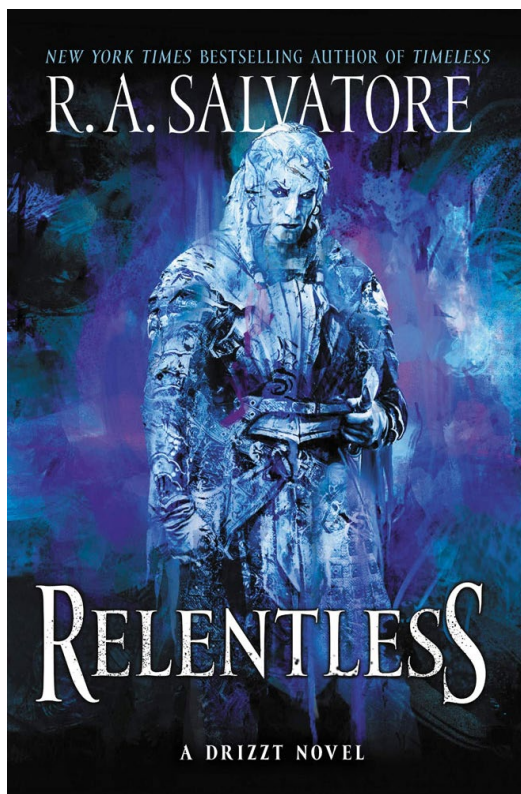
**MSRP:***Escape from Castle Ravenloft* (\$8.99 paperback, \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD), *The Mad Mage’s Academy* (\$8.99 paperback, \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD), *Escape the Underdark* (\$8.99 paperback, \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD) *Into the Jungle* (\$8.99 paperback, \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD), *To Catch a Thief* (\$8.99 paperback , \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD), and *Big Trouble* (\$8.99 paperback , \$16.99 hardcover, \$29.99 audio CD)

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## RELENTLESS BY R.A. SALVATORE

“My heart is always warmed by the idea that people have come to care about this character so deeply,” Author R.A. Salvatore tells *Dragon+*, as his latest trilogy featuring drow warrior Drizzt Do’Urden reaches its thrilling finale. “There are people still reading these books who started buying them in 1988. That thought is overwhelming.”

In the 32 years since he first appeared in *The Crystal Shard*, Drizzt has become one of the most beloved characters in all of



fantasy. From his upcoming appearance in the *Dark Alliance* video game to his recent immortalisation as a Funko Pop figure (alongside faithful cat companion Guenhwyvar), he's officially an icon. And his father Zaknafein has been joining in the fun in these most recent adventures, having made an unexpected return in the final volume of a saga that began with *Timeless* and *Boundless*.

*Dragon+* worked with R.A. Salvatore to create a stat block for Zaknafein, based on his appearance in *Relentless*, so you can add one of Menzoberranzan's greatest warriors to your game. Enjoy!

[Download Zaknafein's stat block](#)

As this rollicking tale of magic, intrigue, and dangerous thrills concludes, its extended cast of characters consider the eternal questions of morality, purpose, and sacrifice. Can the normally timeless bonds of family and friendship endure?

“Because we’ve reached such a dramatic moment in *Relentless*, certain things are revealed about a lot of the other characters. Does Artemis Entreri stand up when push comes to shove? Does Dahlia Syn’dalay take huge risks for other people if she has the choice to save herself instead? I continue to learn more about all of them.”

**MSRP: *Relentless* (\$28.99 hardcover)**

## STRANGER THINGS AND DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COMIC BOOK



Follow the crew from Hawkins, Indiana as they discover the legendary monsters and epic adventures of the Dungeons & Dragons tabletop roleplaying game. Long before the dreaded Demogorgon took one of them to the Upside Down, watch Mike, Lucas, and Will bond with Dustin for the first time over the game that would define their childhood. See the party come together as a team through communal stories and perilous quests to learn important lessons about friendship and find the courage to stand up to the bullies that challenge their everyday. Plus, check out that

**Max Dunbar variant cover!**

**MSRP: Issue #1 (\$3.99 print edition, \$3.99 digital edition), Issue #2 (\$3.99 print edition, \$3.99 digital edition)**

## D&D YOUNG ADVENTURER'S GUIDES

If there are any young readers in your life who might enjoy flipping through pages of magical worlds,



memorable monsters, and the weapons and armor of heroes, this is the series to introduce them to D&D! Four *D&D Young Adventurer's Guides* (*Warriors & Weapons*, *Monsters & Creatures*, *Dungeons & Tombs*, and *Wizards & Spells*) are available, as individual books or a box set.

“The *D&D Young Adventurer's Guides* are meant to introduce people—particularly ages eight to twelve—to the concept of

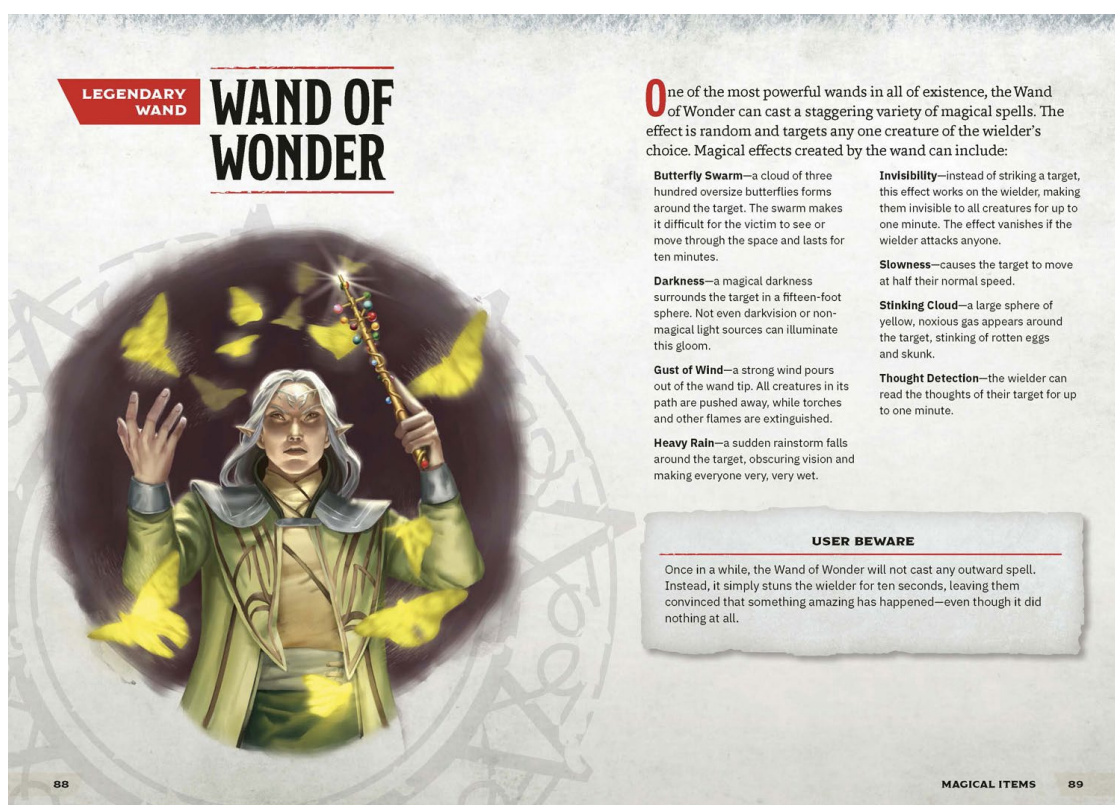
roleplaying and character creation in the worlds that make up a Dungeons & Dragons game. They're not meant to replace the *D&D Starter Set* or the *Players Handbook*. They're more about giving people the ingredients for storytelling and hopefully inspiring them to want to build their own stories,” says Jim Zub, lead author on the *D&D Young Adventurer's Guides* alongside Stacy King and Andrew Wheeler.



(Select to view)

The emphasis of the books is on the roleplaying aspect of Dungeons & Dragons, rather than the nuts and bolts of the RPG system, allowing the next generation of players to focus on the kind of character they imagine themselves to be. “We want them to think about stories, drama, and their excitement for what’s to come. After that we can show them that they need to roll 3d6 and add up their ability scores and saving throws so they can see what all those things represent.”

Readers will also be challenged in more traditional ways. Zub and his team have added short fiction hooks between each section, which ask readers to think about what they would do in specific situations.



(Select to view)

“It’s all about possibilities,” he explains. “We don’t simply want those fiction and encounter options to ask, ‘Do you fight?’ or ‘Do you run?’ There are so many different types of encounters you can have. Can you negotiate peace without having to start combat? Can you sneak into an area or convince someone you’re not a threat? Yes, the game can be about killing monsters, getting treasure, and becoming more powerful. But that’s just one part of playing D&D and it’s by no means the most memorable part.”

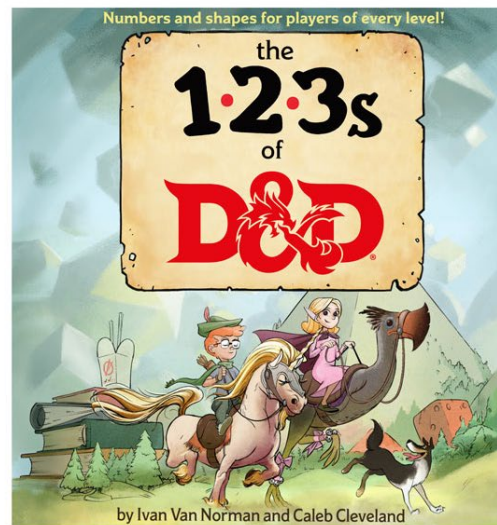
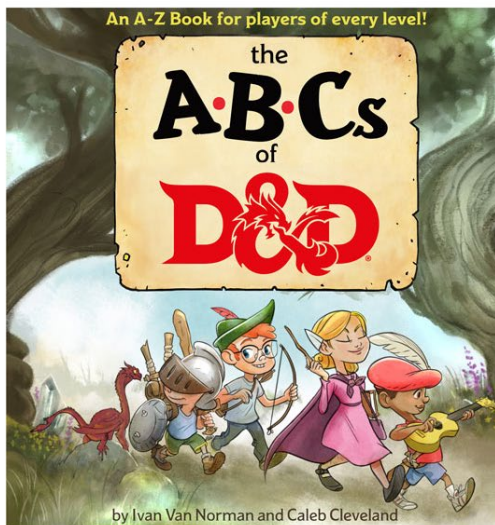
**MSRP: *D&D Young Adventurer’s Guides* collection (\$32.99 box set), *Warriors & Weapons* (\$12.99 hardcover, \$7.99 Kindle), *Monsters & Creatures* (\$12.99 hardcover, \$7.99 Kindle), *Dungeons & Tombs* (\$12.99 hardcover, \$7.99 Kindle), *Wizards & Spells* (\$12.99 hardcover, \$7.99 Kindle)**

## 123S OF D&D/ABCS OF D&D

Ivan Van Norman and Caleb Cleveland’s collaborations make great gifts for younger players because they promote the joy and wonder that can be found in games, while encouraging the power of

imagination and friendship.

The *123s of D&D* and *ABCs of D&D* are both bright and wonderful primers that teach kids about letters and numbers, using read-aloud-friendly rhyming couplets from Ivan and adorable illustrations from Caleb. From one Dungeon Master to nine dragons, they aim to inspire a new generation of roleplaying fans and instill a love of D&D.

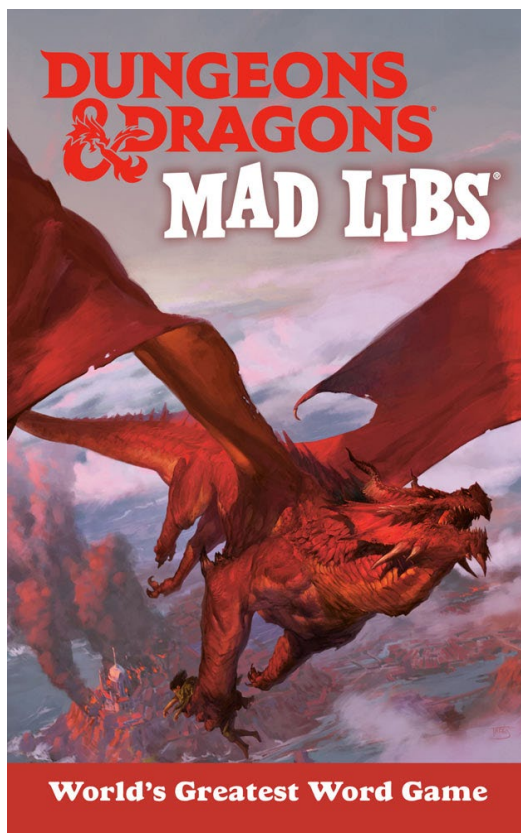


**MSRP: *123s of D&D* (\$14.99 hardcover), *ABCs of D&D* (\$14.99 hardcover)**

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## DUNGEONS & DRAGONS MAD LIBS

It's impressive when two entities smash into each and not only survive the collision but emerge as a more powerful hybrid. We've seen that already with *Rick and Morty vs. Dungeons & Dragons*, and now the world's most popular roleplaying game has been paired with the world's greatest word game.



“It’s great to be a part of a legacy that’s been going for so many years and that so many people around the world enjoy,” says *Mad Libs* Editor Brian Clark, noting that the books (which include everything from *Scooby Doo*, to sports, to *Night of the*

*Living Dead!*) use an unbelievably flexible format of storytelling.

“I love the fun and the silliness. I love the entertainment aspect and also the fact that we are sneakily helping kids to read. I was a reluctant reader as a kid, but by reading *Mad Libs* books I learned what nouns, verbs, and adjectives were—mostly by writing the word fast over and over again in different ways,” he says with a laugh.

Clark reveals that the trick to a good Mad Lib is to mess with the traditions of a tried-and-true thing that everyone understands—but in a respectful way.

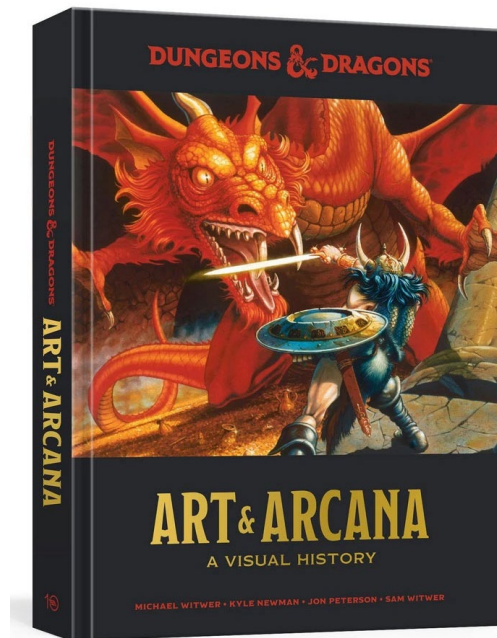
“For example, everyone knows Dungeons & Dragons involves a twenty-sided die. Putting in a blank is a way to amp up the silliness of what type of die you can have. What if we had a million-sided dice? What would that look like? People get to create those images in their own heads because we left them a blank to fill in,” he explains.

“It’s possible to create a dragon that has never existed before and won’t exist until we say it’s an ADJECTIVE dragon. Is it a flower dragon? I would love to see a flower dragon in D&D! Part of the fun of it is that we are simply providing the format. The reader is creating the mayhem, which is a little bit like the way D&D works thanks to

its players.”

**MSRP: *Dungeons & Dragons Mad Libs* (\$4.99 paperback)**

## ART & ARCANA: A VISUAL HISTORY



When the description to your historical look back at Dungeons & Dragons reads like this, you better deliver: “*Art and Arcana: A Visual History* is an illustrated guide to the history and evolution of the beloved roleplaying game told through the paintings, sketches, illustrations, and visual ephemera behind its creation, growth, and continued popularity. Inside the book, you’ll find more than seven hundred pieces of artwork—from each edition of the core roleplaying books,

supplements, and adventures; as well as Forgotten Realms and Dragonlance novels; decades of *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazines; and classic advertisements and merchandise; plus never-before-seen sketches, large-format canvases, rare photographs, one-of-a-kind drafts, and more from the now-famous designers and artists associated with Dungeons & Dragons.”



(Select to view)

If you're wondering why a book on the history of Dungeons & Dragons has four authors, that description is all the explanation you need. Its commentary is all the richer for having had quadruple the manpower in the form of Kyle Newman, Jon Peterson, and brothers Michael and Sam Witwer.

One of the most important jobs was finding all of the amazing art that's been created over the years. From the covers of the modules and sourcebooks themselves, to the magazine advertisements and promotional posters sent to shops, there was so much to track down. That act of "arteology"—finding historical content that had lain hidden all this time and boiling it down into a single book—is itself a legendary action.



(Select to view)

“It was Herculean. But I think that’s partly why it was so awesome. We didn’t only want it to be art with a minimum of words. We wanted to actually look at the importance of the art involved. And we wanted to include an ephemera of products, animation, and curios from the history of the game,” says Newman.

“These aren’t images you can just Google. A lot of the stuff we collected won’t have been seen before. And even if you think you have seen it, you’ve never seen the native art in its full glory. Some of what we’ve captured was only rumored to exist and we were like, ‘Whoa, that’s real?’ That’s what’s mind-blowing about it. You think you know the history of D&D and you do. But there’s stuff in this book that’s going to change the way you look at it.”

*Art and Arcana: A Visual History* also comes as a deluxe, special edition featuring original illustrations by artist Hydro74, re-creations of classic D&D artwork, as well as an unpublished original version of the game’s most infamous adventure module, *Tomb of Horrors*.

**MSRP: *Art and Arcana: A Visual History* (\$50.00 hardcover, \$25 Kindle edition, \$125 Special Edition)**



[BACK TO TOP](#)

# Dwarven Mulled Wine



Pronounced by dwarven diplomats “the finest mulled wine this side of the material plane,” this mixed beverage is a multicultural affair. Originally crafted to celebrate the signing of the Swordsheath Scroll, which ended the Kinslayer War and sealed a treaty between the Thorbardin dwarves and the nearby Qualinesti elves of Krynn, dwarven drinksmiths combined their own full-bodied dragon’s wine and local spices with delicate, fresh fruits provided by the Qualinesti. The result was a perfectly balanced, spicy

and sweet concoction that satisfied and warmed the insides of both groups as they spent cold winters constructing their shared fortress of Pax Tharkas. Years later, during the War of the Lance, this recipe was popularized by Lord Gunthar, Grand Master of the Knights of Solamnia, who would serve it to visiting knights (and himself) as a favorite nightcap. Flavored with orange slices, brown sugar, cinnamon, and cloves, this fruity and full-bodied wine packs a dwarven-size punch, but is sure to thaw your bones during Yuletide or any other time of year.

#### **SERVES 4**

**2 juice oranges, such as Valencia**

**8 whole cloves**

**1/3 cup packed light brown sugar, or to taste**

**1 (750-ml) bottle medium-bodied, fruity red wine, such as Merlot or Syrah**

**1 cinnamon stick**

**1/8 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

**3 tablespoons brandy, or to taste**

Using a vegetable peeler, remove the zest from the oranges in wide strips; reserve one strip for each drink and refrigerate, covered, until serving time. Stick the cloves into two or three of the remaining zest strips and set aside. Cut the zested oranges in half and juice them (which should yield about ¾ cup juice).

In a large saucepan over medium heat, bring the orange juice and brown sugar to a simmer, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the wine, cinnamon stick, and orange zest (including the clove-studded pieces) and bring to a simmer. Adjust the heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered and stirring occasionally, until the wine is fragrant and infused, about 1 hour (do not allow it to boil). Add the vanilla and brandy and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, to blend the flavors, about 2 minutes more. Taste and adjust the flavor with additional brown sugar and/or brandy, if necessary. With a slotted spoon, remove and discard the cinnamon stick, orange zest, and cloves.

Meanwhile, fill one small mug or heatproof glass for each drinker with hot water to preheat them, about 2 minutes. Empty the mugs or glasses, ladle some of the wine into each, garnish with one of the reserved orange zest strips, and serve at once.

#### **COOKS NOTES:**

The flavor of mulled wine improves with rest, so consider starting it several hours ahead of time. Reheat it gently, careful to avoid boiling (which can cause an oxidized taste), then remove the aromatics and add the vanilla and brandy.

Mulled wine recipes vary widely. This one is heavy on the orange, light on the spice and sweetener, and includes brandy for a modest potency boost. However, it can be customized with different liqueurs such as Grand Marnier, Cointreau, or St-Germain, and spices such as cardamom pods, black peppercorn or whole allspice.

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Speed Press, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

# Gingerbread Man



A traditional treat served in the waning light of the month of Sunsebb in Greyhawk, this style of gingerbread man memorializes a legend about the ancient ruins of Castle Greyhawk. There, it is said, all sorts of confections could come to life and harry adventurers, including a fearsome cookie whose description inspired this recipe. The arms and legs of the gingerbread man are ringed with icing, but the body is covered in a protective armor of chopped nuts and raisins. Skewering the plumpest raisin could

slay the fiend instantly—so a fat raisin is usually reserved for the cookie’s mouth. It is customary for children to pluck and eat that one first, to make sure the cookie doesn’t come alive!

#### **MAKES ABOUT 24 COOKIES**

##### **COOKIES:**

**3 cups all-purpose flour**

**3/4 cup packed dark brown sugar**

**1 tablespoon ground ginger**

**2 teaspoons ground cinnamon**

**3/4 teaspoon baking soda**

**3/4 teaspoon kosher salt**

**3/4 teaspoon dry mustard powder**

**1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**

**1/8 teaspoon ground cloves**

**12 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled**

**2/3 cup unsulphured molasses (not blackstrap)**

**3 tablespoons whole milk**

**1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

##### **DECORATION**

**2/3 cup currants or raisins**

**1/3 cup very finely chopped toasted walnuts**

**1 1/3 cups confectioners’ sugar**

**1 egg white**

**1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

**Kosher salt**

**MAKE THE COOKIES.** In a food processor, combine the flour, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, mustard powder, nutmeg, and cloves. Pulse several times to mix. Add the melted butter, molasses, milk, and vanilla and process until the ingredients are combined into a dough with no

remaining streaks of flour, 15 to 30 seconds, stopping to scrape down the sides of the work bowl as necessary.

Dust a work surface very lightly with flour, scrape the dough onto it, and knead briefly until the dough forms a cohesive ball. Divide the dough in half, shape each half into a disk  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch thick, wrap each one in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

Preheat the oven to 350°F with the racks in the upper-middle and lower-middle of the oven. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Working with one dough disk at a time, roll the dough between two large sheets of parchment paper into a circle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick; the diameter should be about 11 inches, but the thickness is more important. Make sure the thickness is even from the center to the edges of the circle. Remove the top sheet of parchment and, with a  $\frac{3}{2}$ -inch gingerbread man cookie cutter, cut out as many cookies as possible. Peel away the dough scraps and carefully transfer the cut cookies to the prepared baking sheets, arranging them with about 1 inch space around them (about nine per sheet). Mash the dough scraps together and with the remaining refrigerated dough, roll out and cut as many cookies as possible. Not all of the cookies will fit on the two sheets, necessitating a second round of baking. Make sure the cookie sheets cool before loading them with more cookies to bake.

Bake until the cookies are just set around the edges and slightly puffed, 9 to 11 minutes, rotating the sheets 180 degrees and switching racks midway through the baking. Cool the cookies on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, transfer them to wire racks, and cool completely before decorating.

**DECORATE THE COOKIES.** Spread the currants on a plate, pick through them to remove any especially large ones, and reserve. In a small bowl, mix  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of the tiny currants and the walnuts, and set aside.

With a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, or a handheld electric mixer, beat the confectioners' sugar, egg white, vanilla, a pinch of salt, and 1 teaspoon water on medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Adjust the speed to medium-high and beat until glossy, soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down the bowl as necessary.

On each cooled cookie, spread about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon icing around the midriff, as if making a cummerbund. Working quickly while the icing is still tacky, sprinkle a scant 1 teaspoon of the currant-walnut mixture evenly over each cummerbund, pressing it gently to help it adhere.

Scrape the remaining icing into a small sandwich or ziplock plastic bag and, using your hands or a bench scraper, push it into one lower corner of the bag. Cut off  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch from the very corner of the bag and pipe two eyes and two thin lines of icing on the arms and legs of each cookie. For the mouth, pipe a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dot of icing and press a large currant into it. Allow to dry for about 45 minutes. Serve or store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

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## ZAKNAFEIN DO'URDEN

To celebrate the upcoming release of the final book in the latest Drizzt trilogy, *Dragon+* worked with R.A. Salvatore to create a stat block for the character of Zaknafein. The following version of the famed weapons master is based on him as he appears in *Relentless*. Enjoy!

### ZAKNAFEIN DO'URDEN

Medium humanoid (elf), lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 21 (+3 studded leather)

**Hit Points** 142 (19d8 + 57)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Str +10, Con +8

**Skills** Athletics +15, Intimidation +12, Perception +6, Survival +6

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** Zaknafein has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Zaknafein's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If Zaknafein fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Poison Resilience.** Zaknafein has advantage on saving throws against poison.

**Second Wind (Recharges after a Short Rest).** Zaknafein can use a bonus action to regain 16 (1d10 + 11) hit points.

**Special Equipment.** Zaknafein wears +3 *studded leather* and wields two +3 *longswords*, a +1 *whip*, and six +1 *daggers*. He carries five *sun pellets* (see the sidebar).

**Standing Leap.** Zaknafein's long jump is up to 20 feet and his high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Zaknafein makes three attacks with his +3 *longsword* or two attacks with his +1 *daggers*.

**+3 Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing damage.

**+1 Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) slashing damage.

**+1 Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) piercing damage.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *TIMELESS*

R.A. SALVATORE

# RELENTLESS

A DRIZZT NOVEL

### SUN PELLET

*Wondrous item, very rare*

This small ceramic ball is specially coated with enchanted oil. As an action, you can crack a *sun pellet* or throw it up to 100 feet, whereupon it releases a brilliant magical light. This light is equivalent to a *sunburst* spell (save DC 15) but has a radius of 20 feet.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** Zaknafein adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

**Uncanny Dodge.** Zaknafein halves the damage that he takes from an attack that hits him. He must be able to see the attacker.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zaknafein can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zaknafein regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Quick Step.** Zaknafein moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Lunging Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** Zaknafein makes one +3 *longsword* attack that has a reach of 10 feet.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2020

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# D&D ACCESSORIES

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## BEADLE & GRIMM'S



While the most exclusive pieces crafted for Beadle & Grimm's premium boxes will only ever appear in those releases, some goodies are available to purchase as single items. We can bear witness to the effect thunking a hefty soul coin down onto the table has on those holidaying in Avernus. And there's no better way to raise the enthusiasm of a group in over their heads on a

heist mission than by giving them a taste of the very dragons they're searching for.



**MSRP: Dragon coins (three per order) (\$15), Soul coin (\$20)**

# DUNGEON MASTER'S SCREEN: WILDERNESS KIT

Your Dungeon Master works hard to create rich, captivating worlds for the players' imaginations to inhabit. Don't they deserve the best help they can get?

This specially designed Dungeon Master's screen includes all the information your DM needs at their fingertips when adventuring in harsh wilderness. Whether you're exploring the jungles of Chult, sailing through Saltmarsh, or navigating the frozen frontier of Icewind Dale, its tables logging weather, foraging, navigation, food and water needs, ship speeds, and more will help them keep the game flowing.



(Select to view)

The screen itself features a gorgeous painting of fantasy landscapes on the outside, with that all-important wilderness information on the inside. DMs also get five dry-erase sheets featuring hex maps, a food-and-water tracker, and rules references (detailing wilderness journeys and chases, and the actions you can take in combat), plus a box of 27

cards that make it easy to help manage common elements in play (including nine cards to help track initiative, illustrated cards of all fourteen conditions, and four cards detailing the rules for exhaustion and extreme environmental effects).

**MSRP: Dungeon Master's Screen: Wilderness Kit (\$24.99)**

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## D&D DICE AND TRAY SETS

Those planning an expedition to Icewind Dale should arm themselves with dice that bring the heat. *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*—Dice and Miscellany includes eleven dice (two d20s for rolling with advantage and disadvantage, one d12, two d10s for percentile results, one d8, four d6s for rolling character stats, and one d4). Its box also functions as two felt-lined dice trays and includes a player-friendly foldout map of Icewind Dale and Ten-Towns, as well as twenty double-sided cards with descriptions and illustrations of characters and creatures the players might encounter in the region.



(Select to view)

*Laeral Silverhand's Explorer's Kit* offers a similar experience with the emphasis more generally on Faerûn than Icewind Dale's frozen tundra or the city of Waterdeep. As the Open Lord of Waterdeep, Silverhand is a notable figure in that city, and parties who have tackled adventures such as *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* and *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage* should be quite familiar with her. She herself takes the lead in guiding players on their path to adventure, through twenty illustrated, double-sided cards capturing insights on key characters, locations, and lore from across the Forgotten Realms.

“All of the information is presented in her voice as she walks you through the Sword Coast and its most prominent people and places,” says Product Marketing Specialist Chris Lindsay. “Given that she is one of the Seven Sisters, and those Seven Sisters are all several hundred years old or more at this point, she knows a thing or two.”



(Select to view)

To learn more about Anamanué Laeral Silverhand, download [her character bio](#) as taken from *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

**MSRP: *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden—Dice and Miscellany* (\$29.99), *Forgotten Realms Laeral Silverhand's Explorer's Kit* (\$24.95)**

# D&D HEAVY METAL DICE SET

Ward off enemies on your next adventure with the commanding roll of these official Dungeons & Dragons dice. Made from substantial zinc alloy material, rolling them sends a satisfying rumble through the Realms! The set includes a d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, and a percentile die—everything you need for your next adventure!



**MSRP: D&D Heavy Metal Dice Set (\$49.99)**

# DEATH SAVES DICE

Death Saves joined forces with its friends at Norse Foundry to create its first official set of RPG dice. Crafted from eye-catching white gemstone material, they feature the Death Saves skull logo as the highest number on every die. Thanks to the naturally occurring stones, each set is unique!



As if those weren't fancy enough, Joe Manganiello's fantasy/heavy metal designers have also released a dice set fit for a Dragon Highlord. This gorgeous, multi-colored set of gemstone dice represent the power of the five races of the chromatic dragons and harken back to the very first Creative Publications/Holmes polyhedral dice made in the early-to-mid 1970s (don't worry, Norse Foundry has differentiated 1-10 from 11-20 on the d20 without you having to color the sides in!).



**MSRP: Death Dice, White Gemstone (\$90); Arkhan the Cruel Chromatic Colored five-Dice Set with Black Metal Coffin (\$125)**

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## FOR FANS BY FANS DICE BAGS

You're going to need somewhere to store all of those marvelous dice and the designers at For Fans By Fans have some of the most inventive bags ever to cushion a die.

“The **Dragon's Hoard Dice Bag** was a spur of the moment design,” says Canadian artist Quietsnooze, also known as Vanessa Stefaniuk. “I work a lot with plushies and I wondered how I could incorporate that into the design.”



“I love dragons, so my immediate thought was that it had to be related to them. I designed all five chromatic dragons but we tested the waters with the red dragon because it’s so iconic. The **blue dragon** is also now available.

“My original pitch for the **Gelatinous Cube Dice Bag** was squishy and had liquid inside of it, like those ’90s pencil cases. I wanted the floating pieces inside the goo to be like confetti, but it turned out that using liquid would have made the manufacture substantially more difficult. We settled on printing those images on the plastic itself.



“I had a lot of fun trying to incorporate some of the more uncommon but still iconic races as victims of the gelatinous cube. You can see tiefling horns on there, as well as tusks that are from an orc or half-orc.

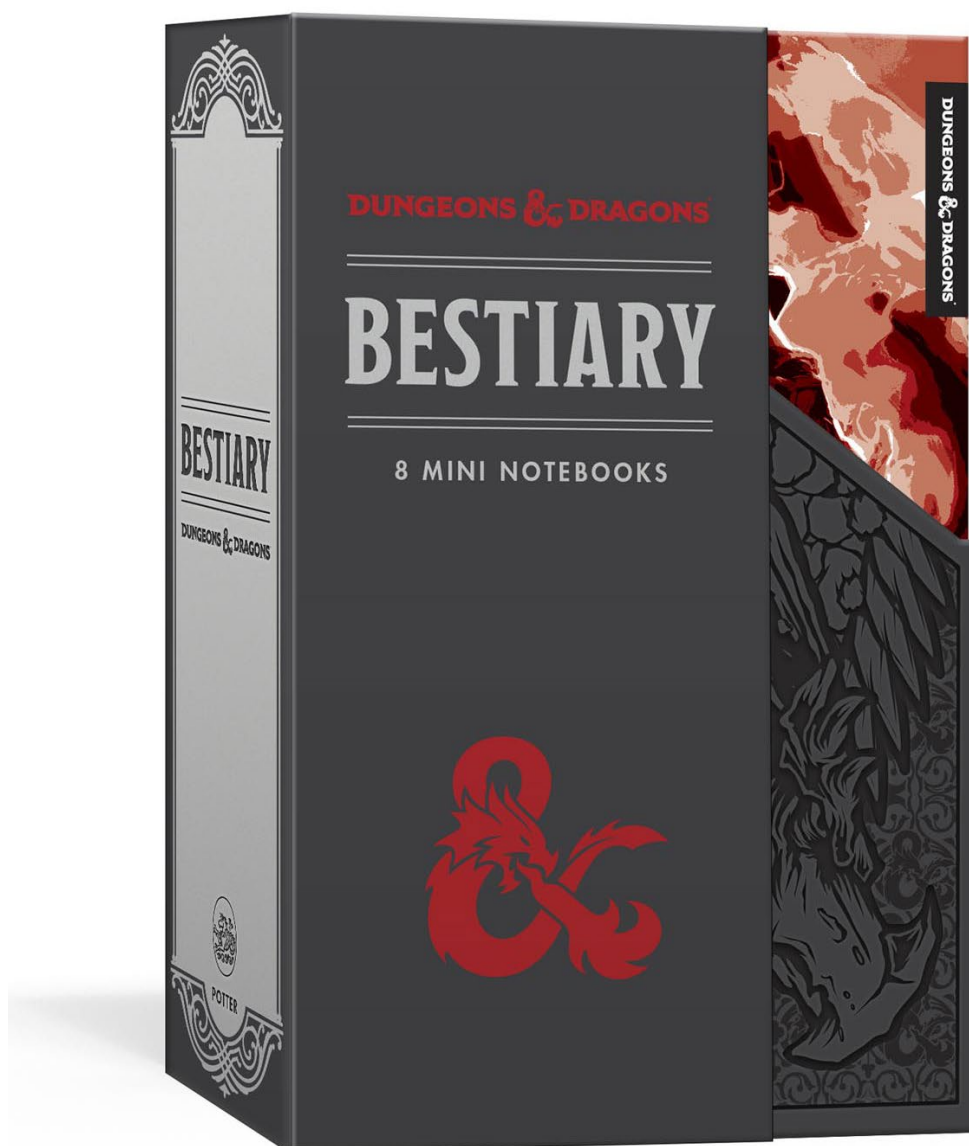
“I’ve put my minis in one of the Gelatinous Cube Dice Bags and it looks like they’re all stuck inside and are pre-melts before the cube dissolves them! I’m going to put that out on convention tables—when conventions are a thing again—to show people that you can put more than dice in there.”

**MSRP: Dragon’s Hoard Dice Bag (\$25); Blue Dragon’s Hoard Dice Bag (\$25); Gelatinous Cube Dice Bag (\$18)**

## D&D NOTEPADS

The world is now overwhelmingly digital and the incredible ease that characters can be created and updated in a system such as D&D

Beyond can't be denied. Yet there's something delightful about taking handwritten notes as you log your party's adventures.



There are plenty of options to choose from when it comes to notebooks, so we'll get scribbling:

- *Book of Holding*: A keepsake journal with a magnetic enclosure. Customizable using five pieces of full color art, this multipurpose book is ideal for capturing character sketches, formulating campaigns, or organizing your everyday thoughts.
- *Worldbuilder's Journal*: Featuring 365 writing prompts this tome is designed to help roleplayers of all levels get their creative juices

flowing, as they generate storied worlds, mythical characters, and unique campaigns.

- *Bestiary Mini Notebook Set*: Pay homage to some of the most beloved beasts and creatures in D&D with this boxed set of eight pocket-size notebooks.
- *Player's Notebook*: Includes 200 pages of half graph paper/half lined paper, with a D&D pencil strapped to its side for making all your campaign notes.

And remember that history is written by the winners—is it *really* necessary to chronicle that time your pants fell down when you critically failed an attack role and drew the very sharp edge of your blade right through your favorite belt? (We still say *yes*).

**MSRP: *Book of Holding* (\$19.99), *Worldbuilder's Journal* (\$16.99), *Bestiary Mini Notebook Set* (\$19.99), *Player's Notebook* (\$42)**



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## D&D Virtual Play Weekends

The latest D&D innovation is here to teleport the fun right into your living room...

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**W**ith the online evolution of *D&D Live* and *D&D Celebration* in 2020, there's been one stand out request: "We want more online games to play."

You spoke, we listened! Our first *D&D Virtual Play Weekend* went live in November and has now become a monthly phenomenon, with the next one launching shortly after this issue of *Dragon+* is published.



To gain access to what is becoming a huge weekend celebration of D&D games, friends, hanging out, and other exciting surprises (which will repeat each month into 2021 and beyond), you're going to need to be on good speaking terms with Durnan. The gruff bartender has the final say on what goes down at the Yawning Portal tavern, and that's where you'll need to head to get your tickets.

[Enter the Yawning Portal](#)

Like all great taverns, once inside you'll find great tales, greater friends, and ultimately the greatest opportunities. Will you join a group and forge out on your own? Or simply listen in on the stories others have to share? The choice is yours—so pull up a chair, raise your tankard, and get ready for the adventure of a lifetime.

The theme of our [December Virtual D&D Weekend](#) is “frosty”. As the Frostmaiden's icy grip is upon us in the Northern Hemisphere, hopefully you're managing to stave off the cold with a fire or warming beverage, lest she pay you a more chilling visit!



## Our next dates for D&D Virtual Play Weekend events are:

December 11-13, 2020

January 15-17, 2021

February 19-21, 2021

March 12-14, 2021

Games will be either two or four hours long—although time slots may be longer to account for the virtual play format or if games run a little over on time.

And each month, D&D Virtual Play Weekends will offer the following features:

- Monthly D&D tabletop play, starting on Fridays and ending on Sundays.
- New D&D Adventurers League adventures—play them here first!
- Dungeon Masters can submit and run their adventures outside of D&D Adventurers League.
- Organization and table assignments powered by **Baldman Games**.
- Play with some of **the best Dungeon Masters** around!

All of this is available from the comfort of your own home. And we have more features planned—stay tuned!



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# Streaming Highlights

Our glorious holiday streams give the gift of gold, frankincense, and mirth! Minus the gold and frankincense...



**I**n a year filled with laughs, frivolity, and general merrymaking, where we can all agree nothing bad happened, you probably don't need to watch a series of fun-packed streams full of hilarious people, some raising money for the great causes Comic Relief supports, right?

That's fine, but we're going to leave these here just in case you know someone who might need cheering up a smidge, as 2020 shamelessly exits the building like a burglar who's bagged up all your cool shiz. Remember folks, laughter is the best medicine when it comes to elevating your mood.

671 Easthaven Avenue

Streamers Rowan Ellis, Chocolate Kieran, Leah, and Imogen Mellor kick off our season of Holiday Specials with the first of two pre-recorded games from the UK. Can this group of petty bandits earn membership into a thieves' guild by stealing a house on the outskirts of Easthaven? Go easy on the potions!



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## Comic Relief Plays Dungeons & Dragons

*Comic Relief Plays Dungeons & Dragons* triumphantly returned on Friday December 4, 2020! *Questing Time* DM Paul Foxcroft leads UK comedians James Acaster, Sally Phillips, Lou Sanders, and Phil Wang on a thrilling adventure, partly guided by viewers voting in the polls.



Timothy Dickspanner played by James Acaster

Artist Max Dunbar joined the fun by immortalizing a motley crew that included Timothy Dickspanner, paladin of Jim Bowen (James), wood elf druid Squirreldalf (Sally), centaur bard Big Hoof Energy (Lou), and orcish wild magic sorcerer Groos Lee (Phil).



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## 40 Stories of Adventure

Welcome to the party, pals! DM Paul Foxcroft leads UK-based comedians Rachel Parris, Heidi Regan, Jarred Christmas, and Sophie Duker in another episode of *Comic Relief Plays Dungeons & Dragons*.

This second pre-recorded special edges into *Die Hard* territory, as a band of heroes tries to successfully deliver drinks to a Wintershield celebration in a Wizard's tower.



Battles, betrayals, and over-ambitious KPIs await the seasoned (and lightly marinated) heroes of *Acquisitions Incorporated* in their latest outing.

**When we last saw** the crew of Omin Dran (Jerry Holkins), Jim Darkmagic (Mike Krahulik), Evelyn Marthain (Anna Prosser), Bobbie Zimmeruski (WWE Superstar Xavier Woods), and Strix Beestinger (Holly Conrad), it was an experience that was truly pie in the sky!

Sadly, it also ended with them being banished to the great prison of Revel's End in Icewind Dale. For the rest of their lives! Although with Jeremy Crawford at the helm as the Dungeon Master, that might be a shorter sentence than they anticipate.



## Stranger Things D&D Holiday Game

*Airing Friday December 18, 2020 (10am PT / 1pm ET / 6pm GMT)*

They've faced a Demogorgon, a mind flayer and the Upside Down as their characters in the show, but how will they fare rolling the famous d20 dice?

Leading actors from Netflix's *Stranger Things* will come together for *Lost Odyssey: Toy Time for Ten-Towns*, a hilarious holiday game of Dungeons & Dragons led by Wizards of the Coast Principal Story Designer, Chris Perkins. The game will be available on [the \*Stranger Things\* YouTube channel](#), this Friday, December 18 at 10 am PT.

This special session features David Harbour, Finn Wolfhard, Gaten Matarazzo, and Natalia Dyer as they try their hand at the game that has become so iconic to the series. [Check out the trailer here!](#)

**Comic Relief** raises money to support people living incredibly

**tough lives. Through humor and stories of hope, it has shown that people can make a massive difference. You can still help *Comic Relief Plays Dungeons & Dragons* reach its fundraising milestones by [visiting this link](#) and donating.**



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## Adventure Cats and the Lost Pyramid of Hissar, Part 2

Ask their owners—cats make the perfect predator. Or in this case, adventuring party. Continuing our fiction from Adam Lee, with illustrations by April Prime, we return to the Adventure Cats of D&D!

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*In the previous issue of Dragon+ we presented the first instalment of **Adventure Cats and the Lost Pyramid of Hissar**. Writer Adam Lee took the spirit of Russ Charles and April Prime's Cats and Catacombs system (itself a spin-off from the pair's excellent **Dungeons and Doggies**) and ran with it, having our feline heroes investigate the disappearance of a number of chipmunks.*

*What we didn't reveal was that the four cats named in the story and pictured in the artwork—created for us by Prime herself—were those*

*of D&D Team members! Shelly Mazzanoble's cat Zelda (A.K.A. the Great Zeldini), Lea Heleotis' cat Zoe, and Ray Winninger's cats Penny and Coop make up our party of warlock, bard, and monks respectively.*

*Questions abounded at the thrilling end to the first part of our adventure: What will the Crow reveal? Can anyone stop the machinations of Professor Whiskerweird? And just what catastrophic events (yeah, we went there) will the Orbulon Device bring about?*

*In the exciting conclusion to this tale we have another couple of additions to our cast. Jeremy Crawford's cat Chesh has been used as the inspiration for our villain Professor Whiskerweird, while Kate Irwin's cat Zizou has become the basis for henchman Noofus (and Bart Carroll's dog may make a surprise appearance as well).*

*Join us now for the thrilling second installment of this tale, which we think also makes a fine bedtime story for any younger gamers in your life.*

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## CHAPTER 4

# The Lost Pyramid of Hissar

A brisk morning breeze blew through Professor Whiskerweird's fur as he, Noofus, and Nod rode atop the giant mechanical dog that clanked and loped across the landscape. As they came to the top of a rise, Whiskerweird ordered the construct to a halt. There, in the distance poking out from a copse of trees, was Hamster Hill.

“Behold, Noofus, and my little Nodling, Hamster Hill—or should I say, the long-Lost Pyramid of Hissar!”

“Hamzterz!” Nod's snaggletoothed grin spread across his face.

Noofus clapped his paws together. “We're gonna live in a pyramid!”

“Nay, doltish one. The Pyramid of Hissar is no place for a simpleton.

There are traps and labyrinths that would confound your miniscule mind. But I have a map, drawn by Hissar himself, that will keep us from harm and lead us straight to the Orbulon. Onward!”

With that, the 12-foot long mechanical dog lurched forward.



Professor Whiskerweird A.K.A. Chesh (Select to view)

Snifter, the hamster shaman, had roused himself from another apocalyptic dream and knew that something dreadful was coming this day. He had told his people to assemble on the hill and prepare for battle. Snifter had seen a beast of legend, something that the hamster sages of old had talked about—a mythical creature, nay, monster, called a doggo.

Doggos, according to the legends, were easily ten times the size of hamsters, horrifying creatures that dug into burrows and left their foul stench everywhere. They could run as fast as the wind and had jaws that could crush a hamster warrior like a crispy crouton. Snifter

thought that the doggo in his vision was a metaphor for some kind of calamitous change like a flood or storm—doggos weren't real.

The dreams were a portent, but of what he didn't know. All he knew is that all the burrows must be prepared for anything.



Cowslip, the hamster chieftain, gathered everyone on the hill. Warriors had brought sticks, rakes, and hoes, prepared to defend their burrows. Cowslip could see the nervousness behind their resolute faces. She had no idea of what they might face, she only knew Snifter was serious and the shaman had never failed to alert them whether it was a stoat incursion, a snake, or a brush fire.

“My hamster horde! As you know, Snifter has seen a series of warnings and we must take heed. These dreams are unlike any others, so we are unsure as to what they presage.”

Just then, there began a faint rumbling in the earth, followed by a sound unlike anything they had ever heard before. The hamsters all felt it and began to look at each other.

Cowslip continued:

“All we know is that Hamster Hamlet is to be defended—” The rumbling became louder. “—and we cannot allow Hamster Hill, our sacred charge, to be defiled by any...”

There was a loud crashing as the enormous, metallic dog erupted from the bracken and thundered up Hamster Hill.

“RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!” Cowslip yelled. The hamsters dropped their weapons and fled from the charging contraption as fast as their tiny legs would carry them. Snifter's mouth was agape. Here indeed was the horrifying doggo of legend, but it was like nothing described in the scrolls. This was no creature of flesh and blood but rather a clockwork aberration infused with an artificial mind. He turned and ran, amazed that he had been alive to see a myth. His report of this day would be told to hamsters long into the future... if he lived to tell the tale.



Professor Whiskerweird, Noofus, and Nod had dismounted before the doggo's charge and walked to the top of the hill, watching as the hamsters fled into the surrounding woods. Whiskerweird still chortled with maniacal glee as they reached the top where the mechanical dog sat and awaited orders. His day was going along delightfully.

"Mecha-doggo!" Whiskerweird called.

The dog's clockwork ears swiveled toward the professor.

"Dig!"

The mecha-doggo jumped up and began to scoop out great chunks of earth from the top of Hamster Hill. Marker stones and ancient hamster glyphs were all turned into a flying stream of soil scattered down the side of the hill by the mecha-doggo's metal claws.

"I can feel it within my grasp, Noofus. The Orbulon shall make me powerful beyond imagining."

"Oooh! Yes! Power, boss. Lots of power!" Noofus danced about, hopping from one foot to the other while Nod batted at his tail.

"Yes. I shall become the Cat Lord—and then once I have, I will then defy the Way of Nine Lives and have ten lives... no eleven... no twelve!"

"Ten lives, eleven lives, twelve lives!" Nod and Noofus chanted.



Noofus A.K.A. Zizou (Select to view)

Just then, the sound of metal scraping on solid rock hit their ears. The tip of a black pyramid poked through the crater that the mecha doggo had excavated.

“There it is! The Lost Pyramid of Hissar! The legends are true!” Whiskerweird’s mad cackle could not be contained as the mecha-doggo cleared out more and more earth that covered the black stone. A stone that was strangely unscathed by the mecha-doggo’s metal claws.

Twenty feet of pyramid was exposed when Whiskerweird called to the dog: “Stop!”

The mecha-doggo came to an almost immediate halt. Whiskerweird then held out a demanding paw and waved it at Noofus.

“Noofus! My spectacles!”

Noofus rummaged about in his pack and produced a pair of magic spectacles that he handed to his master. Whiskerweird put them on and hopped into the pit. His paws felt across the black stone as he scanned its surface with his magic spectacles. Then he saw it, the upper half of a door set into the side of the pyramid so precisely that the seam of it was almost invisible to the naked eye... but to Whiskerweird's lenses, it appeared as a thin, golden line.

"Right where the *Arcane Histories* said it would be," Whiskerweird muttered under his breath.

Noofus sat on the rim of the pit, batting away at the fluffy ball on his hat while Nod looked intently at his master.

"Noofus! Pockets! Get down here at once!" Whiskerweird yelled. "And Nod, bring Balzengraf's with you!"

Noofus jammed his paws into his pockets as Nod fished a large book out of his pack, and they both jumped down into the pit.

"Now for the moment of truth."

Nod opened the book to the place marked with a silken ribbon and held it up so his master could read its faded ink letters.

Whiskerweird held up both paws and intoned: "Pilscatoon!"

There was a pause... and then a smooth, sucking sound, as the slab of black stone recessed within the pyramid to reveal a five-foot by five-foot entrance that descended into darkness.

"By the Cat Lord's silken whiskers. We've done it." Whiskerweird gasped as Nod and Noofus both peeked out from behind his coattails.

Whiskerweird looked up at the towering metal dog. "Stay, Mecha-Doggo. Guard the door." The mecha-doggo sat down with a thud. Whiskerweird turned to the dark passageway into the pyramid. "Come my two shivering numbskulls. Let us see what Hissar has in store for us."

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## CHAPTER 5

## The Crow

The adventurers sat before the towering, swirling shadows that made up the Crow. She was a good eight feet tall now as she sat on her gnarled perch, and the way she tilted her head to look at them made the cats feel uneasy.

Coop's voice broke the silence. "Are you a real crow or are you a bunch of shadows that look like a crow?" Penny elbowed her brother. "Ow! Just wondering," Coop said.

"Tell her about your vision, Zeldini," Zoe whispered.

Zeldini moved forward and looked up at the Crow. She could see her image reflected in the Crow's shiny, black eye.

"Uhhhh. Hello, ummm, your Crownness?"

The Crow stared with uncanny stillness.

"Okay, yeah. Well, I had a vision of a bad cat that we've dealt with before, and we think he's not only responsible for a bunch of missing forest critters—"

"—he's also building a giant mechanical dog, which can't be good!" Zoe added with concern.

Penny stepped forward. "We need to know what he's up to."

"And where he is," Coop added, slapping a fist into his palm.

The Crow was silent as she looked at the party. Her shadowy form twisted and swirled before them, making it hard to figure out where the edges of her feathers were.

"So, uhhh. Anything that you can do to help would be really ummm... helpful," Zeldini said.

"Whisssskerweird," The Crow hissed. For a second, Zeldini could have sworn she saw Whiskerweird's face emerge from the Crow's body of feathery darkness before melting back into liquid shadow. The Crow closed her eyes and sighed. "He has become prey to an

ancient temptation. The kind of curiosity that can kill a cat.”

“Uhh. Like what?” Zeldini asked.

“He has discovered the location of the Orbulon, one of the missing Gems of Power, that has lain hidden since the days of the First Cats. All who have possessed the gem cannot help but use its power to defy the Way of Nine Lives and attain immortality.”

“So that’s his plan!” Coop exclaimed. Zoe couldn’t help but let out a growl. Every cat knew about the Way of Nine Lives, a gift of longevity from the Cat Lord. There were many legends of power-hungry cats who tried to break from the Way, some audacious enough to even attempt answering the riddle of the Great Sphinx, the ancient guardian of the Cat Lord’s realm. Facing the sphinx was a mad endeavor that always ended in death. As far as they knew, no one had ever answered its riddle.

“Typical Whiskerweird,” Zeldini spat. “He needs all those lives to contain his ginormous ego.”

“Where is this Orbulon thingy?” Penny asked the Crow. “If we can get there before ol’ scraggly cat does, then it’s over for him and his big ideas.”

“Go to Hamster Hill,” The Crow croaked. “There you will find the Pyramid of Hissar buried under the hill.”

“Ohhhh! Hamster Hill always looked a little pyramid-y,” Zoe said.

“Holy cats! That’s why that scraggly cat built that mecha-doggo thingy! To dig up the pyramid!” Penny yowled.

“The pyramid of who?” Zeldini asked the Crow.

“Hissar,” The Crow said. “Long ago, during the time of the First Cats, there was a powerful wizard known as Hissar. All of you have been told that no one has ever answered the riddle of the Great Sphinx, but there was one cat who did, and that cat was Hissar. It was he alone who answered the riddle, and so was allowed entry to the Hidden City of the Cat Lord. There, Hissar stole the Orbulon and used his magic power to sneak it back into our world. Once he returned, he built a pyramid to act as a vault in which to house the

Orbulon. Hissar attempted to use its power to become the new Cat Lord but he was driven into madness by the gem and disappeared into the Wildwood, never to be seen again. Over the centuries, the pyramid was buried and the Orbulon was lost to history.”

“Well, it isn’t lost anymore. Let’s get it before scraggle chops gets there!” Coop said.

“I’m ready! Rrrrowwl!” Zoe leapt up and dashed for the stairs.

“Thank you, Crow,” Zeldini said, but as she looked around, all she could see were the shadows swirling back into the darkness and a befuddled Krork sitting on the perch.



The Great Zeldini A.K.A. Zelda (Select to view)

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## CHAPTER 6

# Showdown at Hamster Hill

The clockwork form of the mecha-doggo could be seen through the

trees as it sat next to the perfect, square doorway recessed into the side of the pyramid. Every now and then from their hiding place at the bottom of the hill, the cats could hear the metal squeak and grind as it lifted an ear or turned its head toward a sound in the nearby wood. It seemed very alert.

“Whiskerweird’s already in the pyramid,” Penny hissed. “We have to get in that door and stop him.”

“But how the heck are we going to get by that thing?” Zoe whispered, still in awe of the metal doggo.

After a pause, Coop said, “I’ll distract it. You guys make a dash for the door and get Whiskerweird.”

“I’m with you, Coop. No way I’m letting you take on that doggo alone,” Penny said.

“Paws of iron, sister.” Coop held up his fists.

“Claws of steel, brother.” Penny smiled as she brandished her claws.

“Well... I guess that settles it,” Zeldini said. “It’s you and me, Zoe.”

“Right on, Zel. Let’s get that scraggly cat.”



Hamster Hill was mostly covered with short, green grass, so it wasn’t long before the mecha-doggo swiveled its head around to spot Penny and Coop as they moved up toward the pyramid. It rose, its cogs and pulleys squeaking and grinding, and lumbered about to face the two monks.

“Come on over here, ya big galoot!” Penny hollered as Coop waved his arms about as he whistled and hooted at the mecha-doggo.

Zoe and Zeldini waited at the bottom of the hill, ready to make the long dash up to the pyramid as soon as the doggo left its post. “It’s not gonna budge,” Zeldini said as she watched Penny and Coop dancing about and making a ruckus. “That thing has been magically commanded.”

“What are we gonna do? Penny and Coop are never gonna get past

that thing! We have to get inside somehow.” Zoe wracked her brain for an answer.

“I can’t turn invisible. There has to be some other way we can trick it.” Zeldini rifled through her pack not really knowing what she was looking for.

“I got an idea!” Zoe said and cast a disguise self spell. When Zeldini looked up, she saw an approximation of Professor Whiskerweird standing before her. It wasn’t half bad. “I think I remembered what he looked like from the last time we tangled with him.” The voice was Zoe’s, but it was strange to be looking into Professor Whiskerweird’s green eyes.

“Welp. Let’s hope that doggo isn’t the sharpest knife in the drawer, because this is all I got,” Zoe said and set off up the hill.

As the mecha-doggo watched Zoe-Whiskerweird approach, it cocked its head and perked up its ears. Zoe did her best Whiskerweird imitation and said things like, “Nice mecha-doggo,” and “Play nice with Coop and Penny.” On the other hand, Coop and Penny saw what they thought was Whiskerweird acting very strange coming up the hill.

“Holy cats! Whiskerweird isn’t in the pyramid! He’s right here!” Coop said as he rubbed his eyes and blinked in disbelief. “Maybe if I knock him out, the doggo will deactivate!”

But Penny saw Zeldini in the bushes at the bottom of the hill waving her tail frantically, trying to sign something important. “Wait, Coop. Something’s up.” Penny shrugged at Zeldini and made her mouth silently say, “I don’t know what you are telling me.”

“It’s Zoe!” Zeldini yelled as the mecha-doggo’s big metal paws sent large divots flying from the grassy turf as it galumphed toward Zoe, who promptly turned and ran away from the metal monstrosity. “Run, Zoe!” Zeldini yelled, and hoped that the metal doggo wasn’t smart enough to figure out the cat who looked like Whiskerweird, wasn’t its master.

It took a second or two for Penny and Coop to make sense of everything, but when they finally got their heads together and ran for

the entrance to the pyramid, the real Whiskerweird appeared with Noofus and Nod at his side. In his paws, he held an ornate box inlaid with precious gems.

“What is the matter with my mechanical— What in the blue blazes...?” Whiskerweird cut off his words when he saw Zoe running in circles with the doggo in hot pursuit. Noofus and Nod both looked in the direction of Whiskerweird’s gaze and saw the other Whiskerweird.

“Boss. There’s two of you.” Noofus gasped. “This pyramid is magical.”

Whiskerweird then spotted Penny and Coop running toward them, along with Zeldini who was charging up the hill. “It’s those blasted cats again! Noofus, Nod! Take care of those two meddling monks while I settle the Great Zeldini once and for all!” Whiskerweird hissed as he opened the ornate box to reveal a purple gem that glowed and pulsed. He took out the gem and held it aloft. “Stand by for mind control!”

A halo of purple light crackled around Whiskerweird’s head. An arc of energy then shot out at Zeldini who froze in her tracks, her head encompassed in a purplish glow. “Now, Zeldini, you are my mindless puppet!” Whiskerweird cackled like a crazy chicken.

“Coop! The Orbulon!” Penny said as she faced off against Noofus.

“On it!” Coop leapt and somersaulted off Nod’s head while giving Nod the boot as he did so. Nod staggered, almost bowling over Noofus as he went tumbling sideways down the hill.

“Mecha-doggo, incoming!” Zoe warned as she ran toward Whiskerweird and the pyramid in hopes that it would break the spell of the Orbulon, but Whiskerweird only laughed louder.



Zoe (select to view)

“Fools! Now that I have the mind of the Great Zeldini in the grasp of the Orbulon, I can—” Coop flew through the air and snap-kicked the Orbulon out of Whiskerweird’s clutches. The gem flew through the air, where it was caught in the metal jaws of the mecha-doggo and exploded in a flash of light and a thousand glittering pieces. A purple light swirled around the head of the mecha-doggo which came to an immediate halt as the magical power of the Orbulon infused the mecha-doggo with intelligence.

“Noooooooo!!!” Whiskerweird shrieked. “My beautiful gem!”

While the Orbulon’s mind control spell was broken, Zeldini found

her mind was now linked to the mecha-doggo. She could sense its simple consciousness trying to come to grips with its newfound intellect and sense of self.

“What. Am. I?” The mecha-doggo’s voice echoed in Zeldini’s head.

“Hey there. It’s okay, buddy. You can be whatever you want to be,” Zeldini said in her best soothing purr.

“I can? Ohhh, it’s so confusing. What should I be?” The doggo asked.

“I dunno, bud. What does your heart say?”

“I think... I think I love people... and playing, and rolling in the mud, and... wow. The more I look, the more I love lots of things!”

“Well, that’s kind of awesome, big guy. You go be that, and don’t listen to that Whiskerweird, he’s some bad news. Hey, by the way, do you have a name?”

“No, I don’t have one, but I love names! Ah! I have it! My name is... Puppy!”

“Okay... Puppy it is.” Zeldini laughed and her mind snapped back into her body. Puppy stood next to her, its metal tail swinging back and forth making a terrible racket. Zeldini swore that the metal doggo’s mechanical face was somehow smiling.

“It’s over, Whiskerweird!” Penny said. “Give up or we pound you into dog food!”

“You haven’t seen the last of me, you meowing miscreants!” Whiskerweird sneered as he threw a flat piece of folded paper toward them.

“Littering? Really? At a time like this? Whiskerweird, you really are the worst,” Zoe said, still catching her breath.

“Observe!” Whiskerweird laughed as the paper unfolded itself into a box. “An empty box! Irresistible, is it not?”

The box and its emptiness called and pulled on the cats, compelling

them to get inside of it. Penny and Coop used every ounce of their monastic discipline to resist its silent siren's song. Zoe had already hopped inside, exploring the box and looking out from within its four walls.

“Oh, and that's not all my weak-minded friends.” Whiskerweird hissed as he produced a small wand which emitted a tiny but brilliant dot of red light.

Penny and Coop instantly pounced on the dot.



Penny (select to view)

“Did you get it?” Coop said to Penny as he looked under his paw. “I coulda swore that I got it!”

Whiskerweird cackled with glee but Zeldini had seen enough. “Get him, Puppy,” she said.

Puppy ran toward Whiskerweird, bowling over Noofus and Nod as he galumphed and grabbed the professor gently but firmly by the scruff of his neck.

Zeldini could still hear Puppy's voice in her head. "He's like a fluffy toy that's all squeaky!"

"Yep. Take that toy into the nearest town, Puppy. Look until you find a place with bars on the window. That's the squeaky cat's new home. He'll have friends there who will take good care of him," Zeldini said.

"Okay! I'll take the squeaky cat toy home!" With that, Puppy turned and carried a howling and cursing Whiskerweird off into the woods.

Coop and Penny came to their senses and turned to look at Noofus and Nod.

"Give me one reason why we don't thump the both of you," Coop growled.

"Ah... yeh. We give up?" Noofus said.

"I surrendrz," Nod agreed. Both of them hung their heads in shame.



The cats sat around a table next to a warm fire within the Toadstool Tavern. They were all stuffed with food and drink, and were getting ready to turn in for the night. The chipmunks had been reunited with their friends and word had gotten out that all of the missing forest critters had returned to their homes to the delight of their families. Once again, there was a sense of well-being in the woods around the town of Catalonia, thanks to the Adventure Cats (as they were now being called by the locals). It was also said that a giant, metal monster had dropped off the arch-villain, Professor Whiskerweird, at the local jail before trotting off to chase butterflies, something that the sheriff said was the strangest thing she'd seen in all her years keeping the peace in Catalonia.

"Well, we did okay," Zoe said as she finished off the last of her drink and patted her belly. "And I'm stuffed."

“I’m ready to turn in as well,” Penny added. “Above all, a monk must honor the sacred nap.”

“Words of wisdom from Pad Paw Monastery.” Coop smiled. “One of the lessons that I most enjoyed. I’m off to bed as well. Be like water, my fur-ends.”

“Sleep well, everyone. I’m going to do some more reading by the fire here, but I’ll see you tomorrow and we can see where the wind blows us.” Zeldini smiled at her companions as they trundled off to bed. Then she put up her paws in front of the crackling fire, opened her book of witchcraft, and began a new chapter.



Coop (select to view)

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*As an added bonus, Adam created the first two cats from the story as playable characters:*

**[DOWNLOAD PENNY](#)**

[DOWNLOAD COOP](#)

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### About the Author

**Adam Lee** is an adventure writer, narrative designer, and all-around story guy for Dungeons & Dragons.



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## Dragon Classics

When it comes to artifacts appearing in Tasha's Cauldron of Everything, we consider a veritable walking tank that's makes for one mighty, mighty servant!

by Bart Carroll

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### THE MIGHTIEST MACHINES

I've always found *A Paladin in Hell* ([the first edition PHB image](#)) to be wildly evocative. Beset by devils, one lone paladin must rely on the strength of their arms or be torn asunder. It's an image that exemplifies a warrior's need on the battlefield, to don their best protection.

When it comes to armor, the game's sturdiest (nonmagical) suits have long been plate mail. With first edition's *Unearthed Arcana*, further options came with field and full plate. But sometimes



A Paladin in Hell (select to view)

even more protection is needed. Just ask our brave paladin. Or Ripley. In *Aliens*, the body armor of a colonial marine could only protect so much against even standard xenomorphs. When it came time to face the massive Alien Queen, Ripley needed something greater. Hence, her creative use of a power loader.

In D&D, there are numerous examples of magic armor and protections that go “above and beyond”. With a number of truly marvelous artifacts making their return to the game in *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything*, one such item is the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o*. Below we take an in-depth look at this powerful artifact—including how it originated, and how it’s evolved into its current iteration.

## WHO IS THIS LEUK-O?

While certain rivalries have gained lasting notoriety over the years (between Vecna and Kas, or even Strahd and Van Richten, for example), lesser mentioned is the beef between Leuk-o and Lum.

According to game lore, Baron Lum existed as a powerful warlord—made all the more powerful when he discovered a mechanical artifact that would go on to bear his name: the *Machine of Lum the Mad*. Operating its controls, Lum could orchestrate all manner of magical effects, including the introduction of over fifty new monstrous creatures into the world.

Opposing Lum was a former officer in his command, General Leuk-o. In similar fashion, Leuk-o also discovered a mechanical artifact that would bear his name: the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o*. The two

rivals would clash repeatedly, with Baron Lum eventually defeated and both artifacts scattered and lost to the ages.

When it came to the *Mighty Servant*’s reintroduction in *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything*, Wes Schneider (Senior Game Designer on the D&D Team) tells us: “Artifacts continue some of the longest-running stories in D&D. Every time a character gets an artifact, they start writing the next part of a story stretching back, in some cases, to the original *Dungeon Master’s Guide* or even the personal campaigns of the game’s creators. Many artifacts are prized antiques within D&D, and the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* is definitely one of them.”

Luke Gygax confirms that this very artifact does connect with the game’s earliest campaigns: “Indeed, Leuk-o is named after me. I believe the one who coined that phrase was James M. Ward, who would call me Little Lukers and Luke-o.”

# ADVANCING THE LORE



According to Gygax, the figure of Leuk-o was never a full character in those early games but simply the inspiration for the artifact’s name. As for the artifact itself? “I believe the *Mighty Servant* is inspired by the security robots on the *Starship Warden*, Jim’s ship from the world of *Metamorphosis Alpha*.”

When we last saw the *Mighty Servant*, it was back in 2007’s *Expedition to the Ruins of Castle Greyhawk*, where the device had been disassembled. “For *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything*, we wanted to piece it back together,

polish it up, and let a new host of adventurers take D&D’s favorite beetle-mech out for ill-advised joyrides!” Schneider says.

Along with its reintroduction come updates to the artifact’s lore. As

Schneider tells us: “Artifacts like the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o*—and several of *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything*’s other artifacts, such as the *Demonomicon of Iggwilv*, a personal favorite of mine, and the *Teeth of Dhalver-Nar*—have stories going back decades. Yet if characters can’t interact with those stories, they’re just trivia. When dusting off these antiques, it’s important to be respectful of the stories that came before but also to add a touch that continues those stories, making it clear that these are living, ongoing tales. In the *Mighty Servant*’s case, we namedrop a new character, Lum the Maestro. There’s currently nothing more known about her than what’s revealed in the text, but from that we glean a few things:

- She’s the several-times-over granddaughter of Lum the Mad, creator of the infamous *Machine of Lum the Mad*.
- She pieced back together the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o*.
- She wrote a book that, in part, posits that the *Mighty Servant* *wasn’t* made by aliens, but by the Olman people of Oerth.

“Beyond that, Lum the Maestro provides a connection to the artifact’s history that DMs can run with as they please. For my piece, I’ve been thinking of her as a fast-talking, artificer prodigy with a love of windup toys, named test dummies, as well as super-weapons, but do with that what you will.”

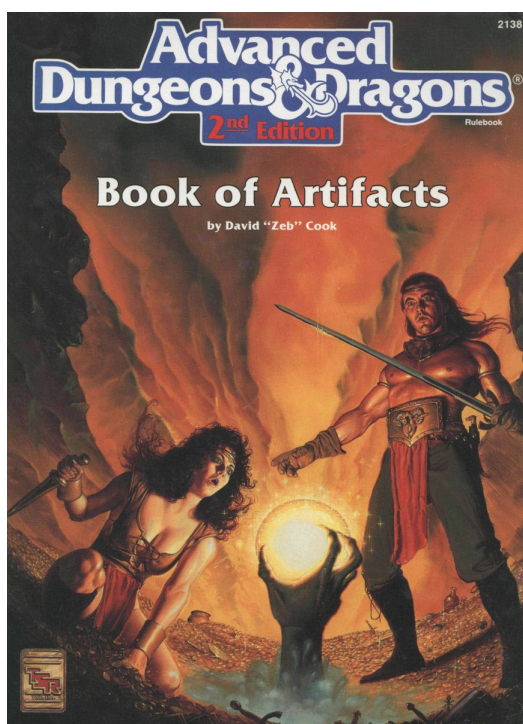
Third edition *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk*’s “Hall of Memory” Level

[DOWNLOAD](#)

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## REFURBISHING THE SERVANT

Many of the game’s original artifacts had detailed descriptions and histories, but when it came to their actual powers, these were usually chosen by the DM from a series of tables (including minor/minor benign powers and malevolent effects, prime powers, and side effects). Both the



Book of Artifacts cover (select to view)

*Machine of Lum the Mad* and the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* were no different, although the *Mighty Servant* also carried an extensive list of its combat abilities.

In second edition, the *Book of Artifacts* provided greater descriptions for both, as well as

specific suggestions for their use in campaigns, and even the means to destroy them.

Second edition *Book of Artifact's Mighty Servant*

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Schneider and the team have now updated the *Mighty Servant's* features for *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*:

“We made it haunted—does that count? The *Mighty Servant* was the favorite weapon of the warlord Leuk-o, so we explain that after he died, a bit of him lingered on in the machine. Under certain circumstances, that spirit can cause the *Mighty Servant* to move, spur the machine's pilots toward violence, or deter those who would try and make it self-destruct. So, to an extent, when the *Mighty Servant* shows up, Leuk-o shows up with it. This, along with Lum, potentially brings both sides of a generations-old rivalry back into play.

“The 2020 model of the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* also comes with a few other standard features, but readers can learn about those on their own. Just, maybe, consider leaving town when you attune to this thing.”

# ADVENTURE HOOKS

When it comes to the concept of adding such a “mech” to your game, there are plenty of potential inspirations:

We’ve already mentioned Ripley’s power loader from *Aliens*—a mechanical solution to a monster-fighting problem. On a larger scale, there’s the *Pacific Rim* movies and *Neon Genesis Evangelion* anime. Of course, you might also re-watch the *Acquisitions Inc. live game*, where a giant mechanical statue was needed to battle a tarrasque. When introducing the *Mighty Servant*, you might similarly look at it as a means of combating a challenge that’s otherwise beyond the party’s abilities.

Conversely, there’s the hook of players needing to combat the mechanical entity itself. The first edition module *Earthshaker!* featured a giant, gnome-built war machine. Players may similarly learn of the *Mighty Servant* already being in the hands of a villainous adversary and need to find a way to stop it. The *Mighty Servant*, or other mechanical entities, might even serve as a mobile fortress for adversaries, much like *Howl’s Moving Castle* or a mechanized version of Baba Yaga’s hut.

In the previous issue, we discussed *brains in a jar* and their need for mobile constructs, with the brain of Veneranda using a helmed horror in *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. Another brain (perhaps that of a recurring villain mistakenly thought dead in your campaign) might make similar use of the *Mighty Servant*.

“You know what are great?” Schneider adds on the subject of bringing the *Mighty Servant* into campaigns. “Artifacts that come in pieces. Drop part of an artifact into a treasure hoard and just try and stop your party from getting the other bits.

“Good news on that front: The *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* now comes in six convenient, plot-driving chunks! Sure, it causes an explosion that’ll level a castle when it blows apart, but after that its bits get scattered far and wide. Perhaps the characters want to put the *Mighty Servant* back together because ‘Hey, free death machine’. Or might they need it to defeat some manner of mech-vulnerable foe? Or maybe they just want to keep it out of the hands of random goblins and toddlers?

“Regardless of the reason, your campaign runs itself now. Enjoy tracking the collateral damage.”

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## FINAL THANKS

Our thanks to Luke Gygax and Wes Schneider for taking the time to chat! As a final word from Schneider, we discussed additional elements allied with fantasy gaming—be it the sci-fantasy of the *Mighty Servant* or the cosmic horror of Icewind Dale.

“I’m always a big fan of ‘we shouldn’t be here’ or ‘this is beyond us’ elements in adventures—situations where the characters get a glimpse of some cosmic truth and realize they don’t have the capacity to understand what they’re dealing with. You know, the sort of stuff *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* does in spades.

“But veering away from cosmic horror, there’s a lot of fun to be had in challenging characters’ expectations about lost ruins and ancient cultures. Getting to the bottom of a ruin and discovering the mysterious monolith-dwellers owned ornithoptors and cavorite engines isn’t just an incredible discovery, it potentially raises questions about other supposed truths in the characters’ world. And once that ball gets rolling, a DM can turn it into endless adventure fodder for their campaign.”

Finally, when asked how many *apparatuses of Kwalish* it would take to defeat the *Mighty Servant*, Schneider replies:

“I like your ideas about wagering on underground fighting bouts between magi-mechs. Let’s talk after the article....”

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# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Rulebook

## Book of Artifacts

by David "Zeb" Cook



## Machine of Lum the Mad



Those few who have seen the *Machine of Lum the Mad* describe it as a black metal horseshoe-shaped nightmarish contraption of immense size. The control surfaces of the machine are sloped and adorned with no fewer than 60 levers, 40 dials, and a switchboard of sockets, plugs, and wires. The controls are of assorted colors and sizes, most obviously broken.

In the center of the *Machine* is a crystal box 4 feet wide by 5 feet deep and 7 feet tall. As many as four man-sized creatures can stand in this enclosure fairly comfortably.

The entire assembly weighs roughly 2 1/2 tons (5,500 pounds) and fills a good-sized chamber. While appearing quite solid, the many broken bits testify that it is really very delicate. Indeed, past owners of the *Machine* have damaged it such that no more than half of its original powers still function.

### History

The *Machine of Lum the Mad* dates back to an age before recorded history. Its design and workmanship are quite singular, making it impossible to guess at its origins. There is strong evidence connecting the origins of this device with the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o*, but these may be apocryphal.

The recorded history of the device begins long ago with the infamous tyrant from whom it draws its name, Baron Lum. Lum was a power-hungry general who happened upon the device during one of his conquests. Prior to his acquisition of the thing, Lum was a petty warlord whose legacy would certainly have been lost. With the aid of the *Machine*, however, he wrote himself a bloody chapter of wars and brutality into mankind's history.

By all accounts, Lum was something of an artificer himself. While the creation of the machine was certainly beyond his skills, he was apparently able to learn more about its functioning than even the wisest sage might hope to. It may be that the study of the basic workings of the machine (which combines magic and tech-

nology in ways the two were never meant to be merged, by techniques and secrets long [and best] forgotten) drove Lum to madness. It is said that Lum unleashed no fewer than 50 new species of monsters on the world in his quest to master the *Machine*. At one point, it is said, Lum used the settings of the *Machine* to call down a barrage of fire that decimated an army besieging his stronghold. In so doing, of course, he annihilated a large number of his own troops. However, he carried the day and, as such, he judged the event a great victory.

Lum's chapter in the history of the *Machine* ends with both the warlord and his device being consumed by a cloud of vapor which billowed forth from nothing and left nothing when it faded. It would be easy to assume that the machine was forever destroyed, were it not for persistent though garbled reports of its existence in a distant and dreadful land.

### Campaign Use

The *Machine of Lum the Mad* is a complex device whose inner workings are impossible to discern. The nearly infinite combination of settings possible with the levers, dials, and switches set into the machine makes figuring out its operation an insurmountable task. Indeed, the creative DM might make an entire adventure out of attempting to learn what one particular setting might do. To aid the DM, the player handout on the opposite page provides a useful diagram for those foolish enough to tinker with this device.

Unlike many other artifacts, the *Machine* is neither good nor evil. It is utterly neutral and the morality of its use is based wholly upon the actions of its current owner.

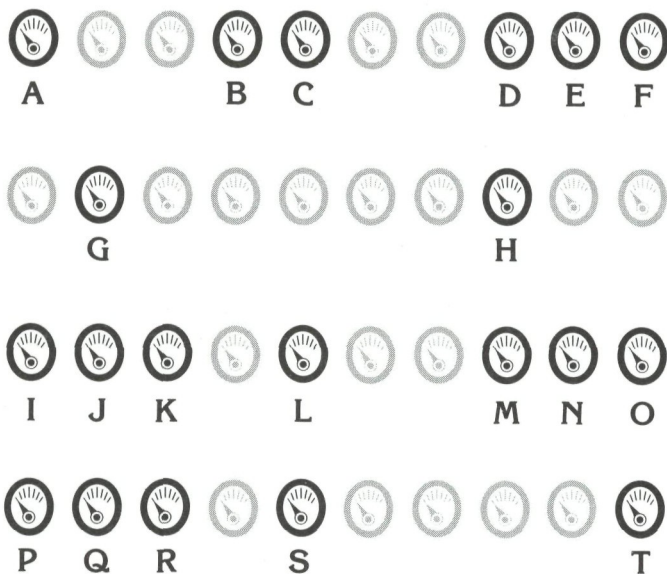
Players who come into possession of the *Machine* must be very careful with it. While the thing is not evil, it has the unfortunate side-effect of driving its users insane. If they encounter the device in the hands of another, that person will almost certainly be beyond reason as well. An encounter with such people might be very dangerous, indeed.



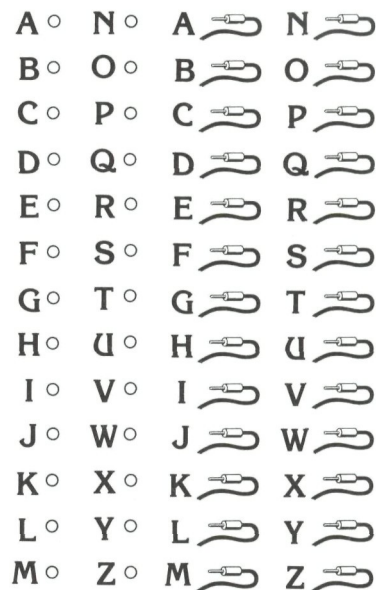
## Machine of Lum the Mad

### Control Panel of the Machine of Lum the Mad

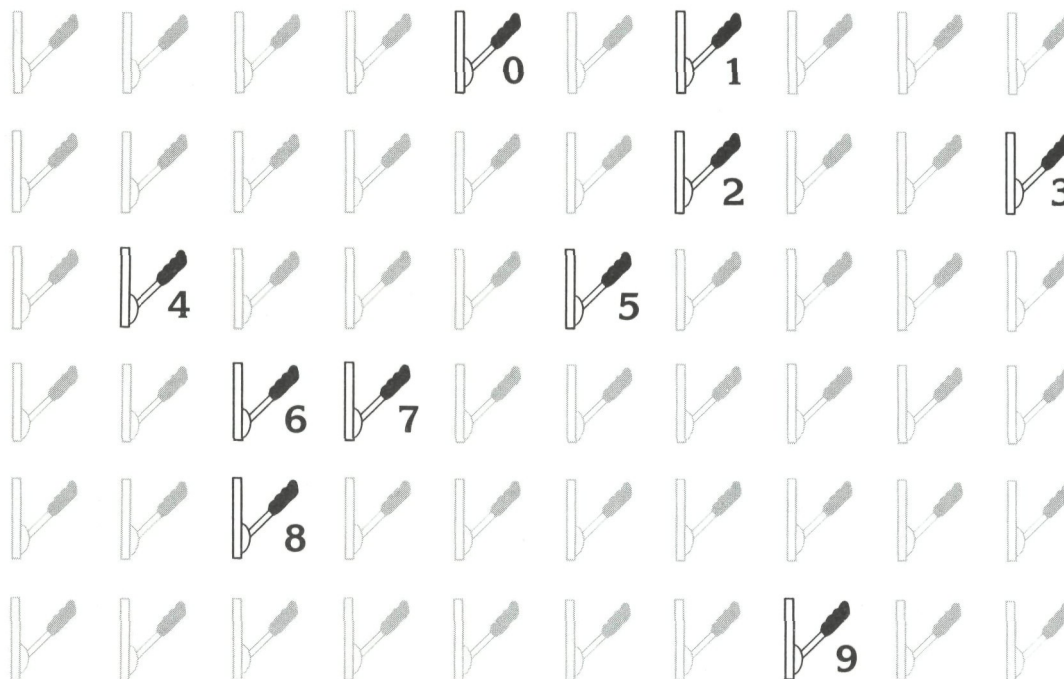
#### Dials



#### Switchboard



#### Levers







The *Machine* has three different types of controls—levers which are either on or off, dials that must be set to the correct position, and a switchboard that relies on correct pairs. Each control has a different code in the combination. By not-

Clearly, with this many combinations the chance of any character randomly choosing a working combination is a little less than slim and barely better than non-existent. This means that any adventure involving the *Machine* is about more than just finding and using it. It should also include smaller adventures to gather the pieces of one or more useful combinations.

## Machine of Lum the Mad



For example, on one scroll the characters find a combination for the levers, in another those for the dials, and in a third (and separate adventure) the settings for the switchboard. They now have a complete combination—if all three parts are for the same power!

After each use of the *Machine*, there is a 70% chance that some reaction within the mechanism alters the settings required to duplicate a given effect. If this happens, the combination of settings scrambles itself, seemingly at random. Users of the *Machine* receive no indication that this has occurred. Since incorrect settings could trigger side effects or cause explosions, duplicating a previously achieved effect is a risky business.

Because of the random nature of the *Machine* and the large number of powers, there is no absolute list of what *Lum's Machine* can or should do. The DM is encouraged, therefore, to tailor the possible powers to suit the campaign. Virtually any and all of the powers listed in the tables of **Appendix B** can be associated with the multitude of setting combinations.

**Curse.** There are several risks inherent in the use of the *Machine*. The first of these is the need for accuracy. Any time the *Machine* is started without a correct combination entered on the control panels, the DM should roll for a result on **Table 2: Machine Failure** and apply the result.

**Table 2: Machine Failure**

d100	Results
1–50	Nothing happens
51–65	Sparks and noise, nothing happens
66–70	1 control breaks
71–75	Internal explosion, 1d4 + 1 controls break
76–80	Random power triggered in crystal chamber
81–85	Random power triggered in room
86–90	Random result from <b>Table 14: Curses</b>
91–95	Large explosion, all within 20 feet of Machine suffer 2d10 points of damage
96–100	Machine vanishes

Second, every time an effect is triggered, the operator of the *Machine* must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If failed, the character's Intelligence score increases 1 point while the Wisdom score drops by 1 point. With each transfer, the character's cranium increases in diameter by 10%.

### Suggested Means of Destruction

- The *Machine* is quite delicate and can be destroyed with repeated blows, each ruining 1d4 controls. Each blow has an 80% chance of causing an explosion, inflicting 2d12 points of damage on the attacker.
- Every 100 years, the *Machine* loses 1d4 of its powers through natural entropy.



## Mighty Servant of Leuk-o

The *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* is a towering automaton of jet black metal, shadowy crystal, and several mysterious fibrous materials. The device stands over 9 feet tall, is nearly 5 feet wide, and some 6 feet deep. It is rounded and might remind one of a cross between an overly stout (if gigantic) dwarf and a lumbering beetle. The servant has two stocky legs, on which it walks with a curious swaying motion, and a pair of dangling arms.

An internal compartment is configured to seat two man-sized creatures comfortably. Externally, as many as five others might perch safely upon the servant when it is in motion. As might be expected, this dreadful thing is quite heavy, weighing nearly two tons, and is hideously noisy when in operation.

### History

The *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* is believed to be a construct of the same ancient and mysterious race that built the dreaded *Machine of Lum the Mad*. The workmanship and materials evidenced by the *Mighty Servant* are unlike any found in the recorded histories of men, making it impossible to state just what their nature might have been. Some sages, citing the craftsmanship and appearance of the thing, speculate that it is the handiwork of a now-extinct branch of the dwarves. Dwarf sages note (with some reluctance, it must be said) that never in their race's extensive histories has anyone ever found a reference to this machine.

All accounts of the *Mighty Servant* begin with its discovery by the infamous General Leuk-o. Leuk-o was a follower of the warlord Lum, but turned against his master when he came into possession of this instrument of destruction.

With the power of the *Mighty Servant* to back him, Leuk-o forged an army that rivalled even Lum's. The two forces clashed many times, always ending in stalemate. At last, the two forces met in a final battle. Lum and Leuk-o faced each other, their mighty artifacts unleash-

ing powers greater than any since harnessed. It is said that their battle laid waste to a great kingdom and left a scorched desert in its wake.

The *Mighty Servant* is believed by many to have been destroyed in this final battle, although others believe it plunged through a dimensional rift opened in that great conflict.

### Campaign Use

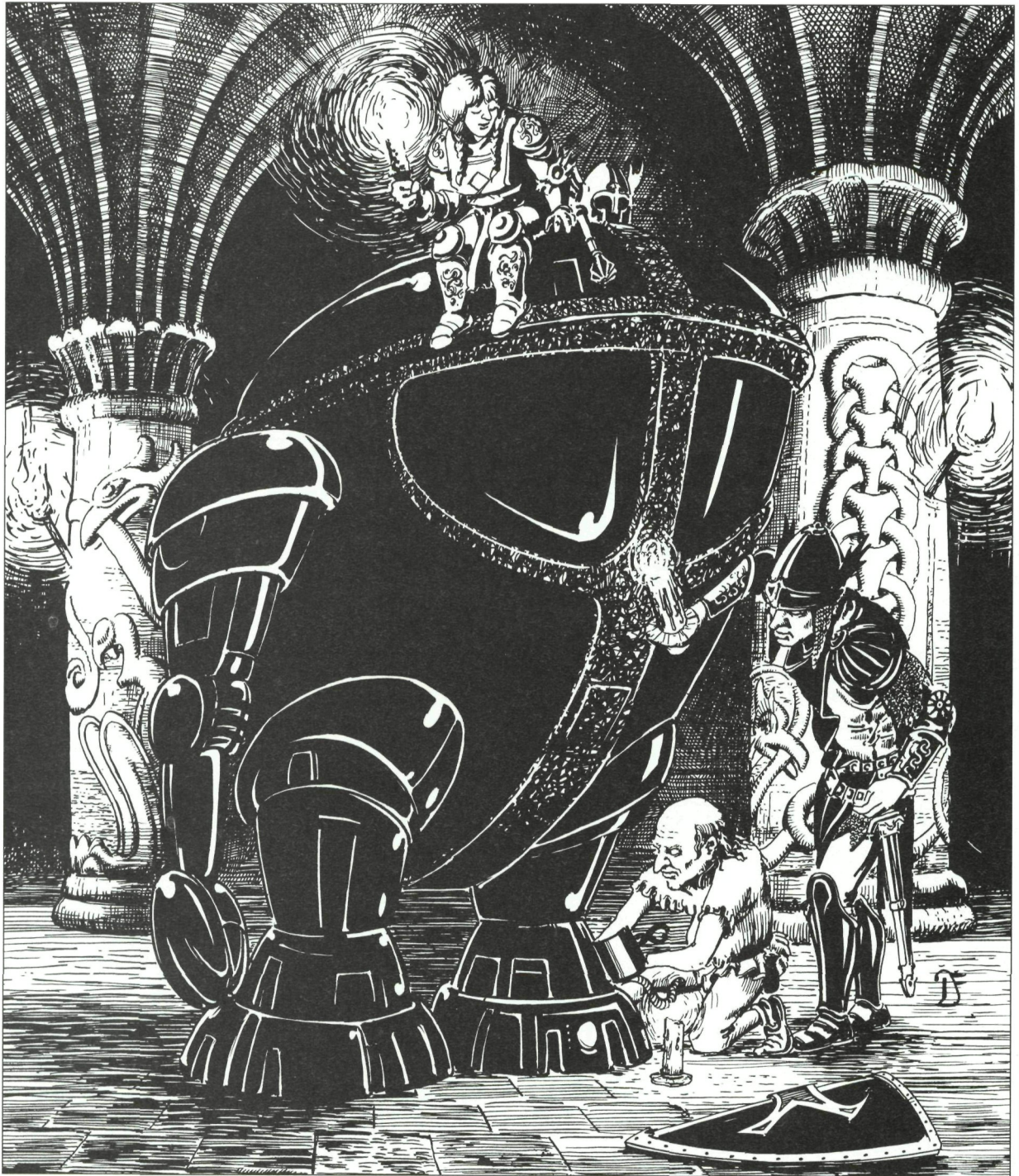
The *Mighty Servant of Leuk-o* is a great weapon. With this automaton at its head, any army might be almost invincible. Player characters who encounter the device may find themselves facing an enemy who is using it to destroy the forces of good. Raising an army strong enough to battle the *Mighty Servant* and its followers would be a task worthy of any adventurer.

Because any person using the weapon must eventually become a chaotic warlord, it should not be allowed to remain in the hands of player characters.

Because operation of the *Mighty Servant* requires knowledge of numerous magical command phrases, adventurers may find themselves exploring the most ancient and deadly of ruins in search of lore that might reveal one or more of the machine's secrets.

### Powers

**Constant.** The *Mighty Servant* has an Armor Class of -6 and 60 hit points. It can only be struck by +2 weapons or better. Bludgeoning weapons inflict only 1 point of damage, while edged weapons cause but half their normal damage (rounded down). It has a 90% magic resistance and is utterly immune to acid, cold, heat, normal fire, vacuum, and water. Lightning, electricity, and magical fire will inflict but 20% of their normal damage (rounded down)—but only if the magic resistance fails. Even if it is damaged, the *Mighty Servant* regenerates 2 hit points per round. Anyone riding within the





## Mighty Servant of Leuk-o

servant is fully protected by its shell.

**Invoked.** The *Mighty Servant* is inert until someone controls the device from its interior compartment. If the proper command words are known, the *Mighty Servant* can be commanded to open the hatch in its back. Once inside, the character is faced with a daunting array of pedals, switches, levers, and wheels that all control the thing's operation. Controlling the *Mighty Servant* can be learned by trial and error (with appropriate random destruction) or through information gleaned from libraries and sages. The DM is encouraged to make the process difficult and dangerous to bystanders.

The automaton has a movement rate of 3, making it a slow and clumsy thing. Furthermore, after 12 hours of operation it must cease all activity for 1 hour while it gathers anew the magical energy that powers it.

In combat, the *Mighty Servant* can strike with its great arms once per round. It strikes as a 10-Hit-Die creature. Each blow landed by the automaton inflicts 10-60 (1d6 × 10) points of damage.

The power of this weapon is so great that it can be used to destroy castles and shatter fortifications—see **Combat (Unusual Combat Situations)** in the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide*. If used as a siege weapon, a blow from the *Mighty Servant* does the same damage as a screw or ram. If used in a *BATTLESYSTEM™* game, the *Mighty Servant* can be assumed to have the following statistics: AD d12 + d8, AR 4, HD 10, Hits 5, MV 3. In addition, many of its powerful special abilities can be employed with great effectiveness on the field of battle.

**Random.** As one of the greatest weapons ever to appear in the world, the *Mighty Servant* has 6 abilities from **Table 28: Offensive Powers** and 6 additional from **Table 25: Major Spell-Like Powers**. The *Mighty Servant* also has 2 abilities from **Table 23: Healing** that apply to any one creature in the interior compartment. Again, the operation of any given ability requires knowledge of which controls must be pulled, switched, pushed, or cranked. Each of these abilities

drains magical energy from the *Mighty Servant* equal to 1 hour's worth of continuous operation.

**Curse.** The *Mighty Servant* hungers endlessly for combat and bloodshed. With each use of the servant's powers, the operator must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell or become filled with battle fury for 24 hours. During that time, the artifact is used in a rampage of destruction to any and all within reach.

In addition, the *Mighty Servant* places the character at risk of *artifact transformation*. Those affected by this power gradually have their alignment shifted to chaotic neutral.

### Suggested Means of Destruction

- It is possible to destroy the *Mighty Servant* by simple physical attack, assuming that enough damage can be inflicted.
- There might be a command phrase which even Leuk-o never knew that causes the *Mighty Servant* to explode. The radius of this fireball and the damage that it might inflict is unknown, but must certainly be terrible since it involves the release of all of the magical energies of the servant in one single surge.
- Ancient writings speak of a means of destroying the *Mighty Servant* with the dreadful *Machine of Lum the Mad*. Lum himself is said to have believed that there was a setting on his *Machine* which would utterly destroy the automaton, but if he found such a setting he never used it.

## THE HALL OF MEMORY

This small level holds many of the fabulous treasures that Zagig gathered during his travels—particularly from his adventures with the Company of Seven in the early decades of the fourth century. Several of these chambers also house portals to other realms. During this part of the adventure, the PCs are destined to visit three of these demiplanes—the whimsical (but no less dangerous) Dungeonland, the sweltering Isle of the Ape, and the Abyssal realm known as Hollow's Heart.

The ceiling height on this level is 10 feet unless otherwise indicated. Doors are made of stout bronzewood (2 in. thick, hardness 10, 60 hp, break DC 28). Most are unlocked because the keys were lost long ago, but each does have a keyhole and can be locked with a successful DC 30 Open Lock check. This level is lit by *everburning torches* that burn in bronze sconces set every 40 feet along the walls.

### J1. THE GREAT SPIRAL STAIR

Characters who descend the spiral staircase from area I39 (page 164) emerge into the center of this chamber.

### SECRETS UNVEILED

After communicating with Shenda, the PCs are close to achieving their goal. They have doubtless learned a great deal about the false Iggwilv and her plans, but they are likely to be missing some key information—especially about the mysterious “shards” that Shenda mentioned. Although they can certainly learn more simply by exploring the remaining dungeon levels, smart PCs might turn to spells such as *commune* or *divination*. If they do, use the results of these spells to fill in any missing information and guide the group in the right direction.

*Encased in a circular lattice of steel bars, the spiral staircase descends about 70 feet from the center of this octagonal chamber's domed ceiling down to its floor. On the ceiling, a decorative painted carving of an exotic, serpentine dragon winds around the top of the enclosure holding the staircase, and a gate at its base allows entry into the room at the bottom. Eight hallways radiate from this chamber's walls, although entrance to the southernmost passage seems to be barred by a field of rippling orange energy. The air smells strongly of cherry blossoms.*

Zagig didn't leave the entrance to the Hall of Memory without a guardian. The dragon carved into the ceiling is in fact an exotic dragon from the Far Western Shaofeng Kingdom. On a rare trip beyond the Baklunish West, Zagig and his companions spotted this creature, a young adult t'ien lung named Han-Tan Chun. With his serpentine shape, his dull gold scales, and his multicolored mane and whiskers, he seemed more like a treasure than an enemy, so the company captured him and brought him back to Castle Greyhawk. There Zagig enslaved the dragon and bound him into this mosaic to provide amusement for his friends and a surprising challenge to any who might attempt to break into the treasury.

When the first PC descends to within 20 feet of the floor, the mosaic tears itself from the wall—one colored stone at a time—forming a guardian dragon that attacks everyone on the stairs. Han-Tan Chun does not listen to reason because he is both magically compelled to destroy all interlopers and enraged at his lowly guard duty.

**Tactical Encounter:** 6–8, The Great Spiral Stair (page 201).

**Treasure:** A successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that some dragons from the western lands have magic gemstones in their brains. Han-Tan Chun is no exception—inside his brain is a pearl worth 1,000 gp.

### J2. THE OCTYCH TRIALS

*Rippling, shimmering orange energy blocks the entrance to this hallway, which seems to end about 100 feet to the south.*

In fact, nine separate fields of orange force block advancement along this long hallway. The fields are translucent and radiate light, but they distort vision to an extent. Anyone who peers down the hall can see where it ends,

The most important fact that the PCs have yet to learn is that the false Iggwilv plans to use essence harvested from luz to become a truly living creature with her own soul and the capacity to grow more powerful. If luz is freed from his prison, she cannot accomplish that goal. But to free luz, the PCs must recover the keys to the *Godtrap* (the “shards” mentioned by Shenda) from the three demiplanes within which Livashti has hidden them. Armed with these items, the PCs can deactivate the *Godtrap*, thereby not only releasing luz, but also rendering the false Iggwilv vulnerable to harm so that the characters can defeat her.



*Battle breaks out on the great spiral stair*

but only a character who makes a successful DC 10 Spot check (+2 for each intervening field of force and normal distance modifiers, so the DC is 36 from area J1) can see the small, triangular shape floating in the air at the end of the hall. This object is the fabled *octych* sought by the Greyhawk Thieves' Guild (see *The Real Story*, page 88). If one of the PCs is wielding *Norebo's Hand*, that individual might be compelled to seek the *octych* regardless of what his companions might prefer to do.

To reach the *octych*, the PCs must pass through eight visions, one held within each of the eight rooms along the length of this hall. By passing the tests in these chambers, they can learn about the *octych* and gain *octych* points, which provide them a significant advantage in defeating the ancient Suloise spirit that guards the object.

Anyone who touches an orange field of energy feels a slight jolt, as if from static electricity. At that moment, all PCs in area J1 (or in the current chamber in J2) are transported into the next chamber to the south; characters beyond these areas are not.

Each time one or more characters enters a new chamber, read the corresponding readaloud text that describes the vision they are experiencing, then give the PCs involved a few moments to decide what to do. To "solve" each of these eight rooms, at least one of the characters within it must succeed on a specific skill check or saving throw, or successfully perform a certain action. On a success the party

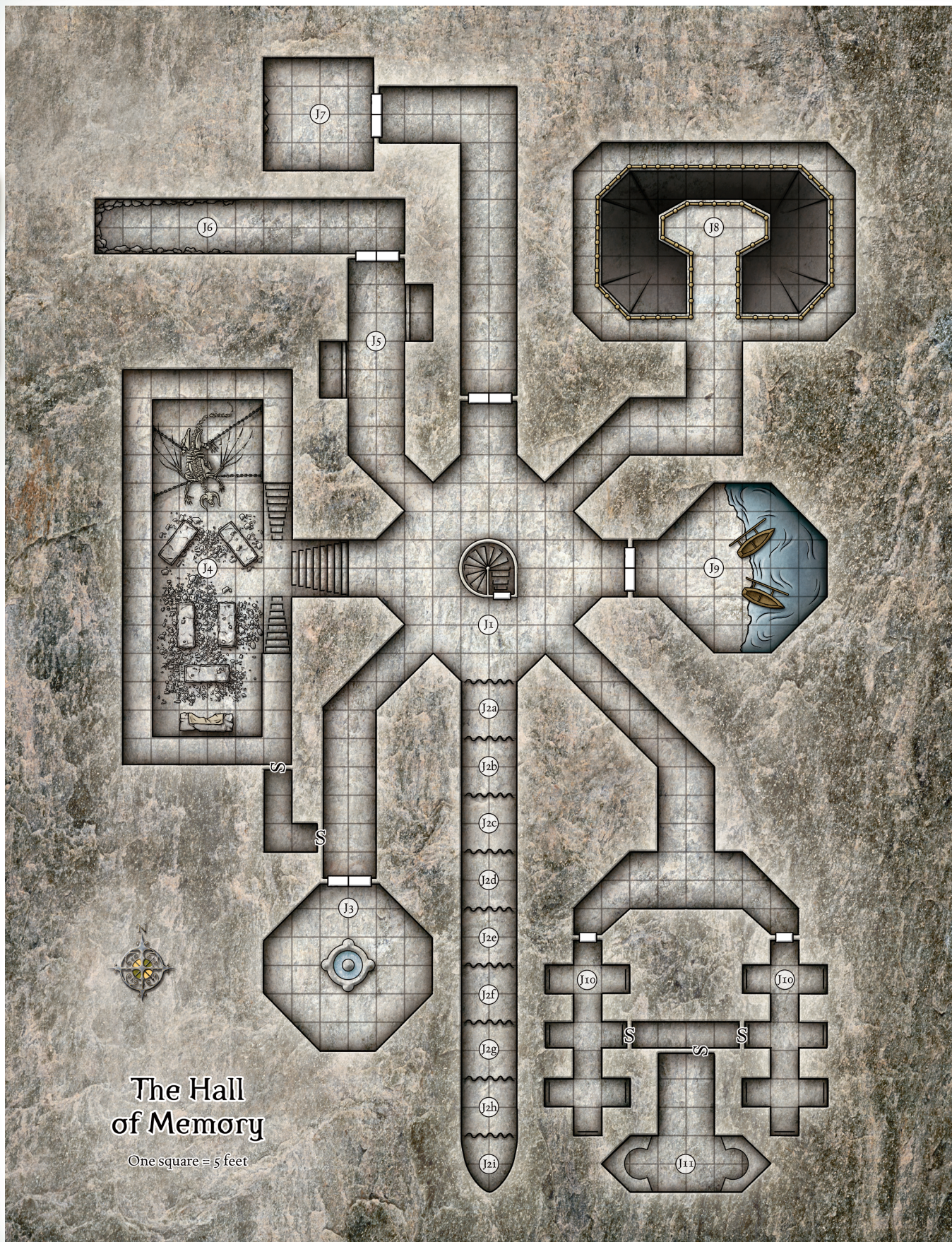
gains 1 *octych* point, and the vision fades immediately. On a failure, the vision fades after 1 minute and the group takes the indicated penalties.

After the vision disappears, the PCs find themselves in a 10-foot-square, plain stone chamber with a field of orange energy to the north and the south. Touching the northern field transports them back to area J1 and removes any *octych* points they have accumulated. Touching the southern one moves them to the next chamber in the sequence and allows them to keep any *octych* points they have gained so far.

## J2a. Lesson

You are in a large chamber, seated in a semicircle with your friends. At the front of the room, your teacher—a powerful wizard named Slerotin—is lecturing you on the nature of the true magic that lies beyond what mortals can shape into spells. This, he says, is power magic, and its direct manipulation is what allows the Suel Imperium—your home—to prosper in the face of adversity. Eventually, your teacher turns to you and asks you to repeat the lesson to him.

No matter how the PCs respond to the question, each can attempt a DC 20 Spellcraft check. If at least one succeeds, the teacher smiles, and the group gains 1 *octych* point. If everyone fails, feelings of shame overcome all the PCs, and each takes 2 points of Wisdom damage before the vision fades.



## J2b. Legacy

*You have graduated and mastered the use of power magic. You and your classmates, who are now your boon companions, stand in the plaza of a mighty city at the heart of a verdant empire. Before you, an upthrust pillar of rock shudders and shakes. Slerotin has asked you to imagine that you stand at the end of time and wish to erect a monument to the greatest wizard of Oerth. You have just begun your work on the rock and are eager to see what it will become.*

Ask each player to write down on a piece of paper whom he wishes to make the statue resemble. A character who raises a statue in Zagig's image hears a friendly chuckle in the distance and gains a permanent +1 inherent bonus to Intelligence. If any character raises a statue in his or her own image, the group gains 1 octych point. If no one makes a statue of himself or herself, each character takes 2 points of Charisma damage, and the vision fades.

## J2c. Invoked Devastation

*You and your allies stand alongside your master Slerotin before the Suloise Emperor, counseling him on the wisdom of mounting a strike against the hated Baklunish Empire. That nation's crimes against the Suel are countless, yet Slerotin urges restraint. The emperor disagrees, desiring to invoke a devastation upon the Baklunish Empire that would wipe it from the world. What do you say is the best course of action?*

Allow the PCs to argue for or against this devastating strike against the enemy. Whatever the consensus, each must then attempt a DC 20 Diplomacy check. If at least one character succeeds, Slerotin smiles in pride, and the group gains 1 octych point. If everyone fails, the emperor grows weary and dismisses the group. Each character takes 1d4+1 points of Charisma damage, and the vision ends.

## J2d. Rain of Colorless Fire

*Slerotin's advice has been ignored, and the emperor has ordered you to destroy the Baklunish Empire with the Invoked Devastation. But when you begin to produce the terrible magic, you realize that he has underestimated the enemy, because you can feel power building in opposition to your own. As your magic wipes the enemy from the face of Oerth, a terrible Rain of Colorless Fire strikes the Suel Imperium. You stand upon the parapets of your towers, watching helplessly as the fire burns away the world, leaving behind only a sea of dust. Just as the effect is about to consume your tower, you hear Slerotin's voice. He says that he has prepared an escape for the few citizens he could gather, but he needs your aid in opening the tunnel under the mountain that will lead to safety in the world beyond.*

Ask each character if he or she wishes to accompany Slerotin into the new world. Anyone who agrees to do so must make a successful DC 20 Reflex save. Those who fail (and those who choose to stay behind) burn to death in the Rain of Colorless Fire. As long as one PC escapes with Slerotin, the group gains 1 octych point; otherwise

the vision fades, and each character takes 15d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 25 half).

## J2e. Passage

*You and your companions are again with Slerotin, leading the Suel survivors through a seemingly endless underground tunnel that he has carved through the foundation of the world. Now and then, the passage intersects existing tunnels inhabited by strange and terrible creatures, and you must defend the refugees from their claws.*

Tell the players that the group has entered an immense cavern filled with dozens of monsters that hunger for the flesh of surface-dwellers. Ask each to describe how his or her character defends the refugees from the monsters. A character who fights can make an attack roll against AC 20 using only his base attack modifier, and a character who uses magic can attempt a DC 20 caster level check. If at least one PC succeeds, the monsters are vanquished and the group gains 1 octych point. Otherwise, every character takes 10d6 points of damage (no save), and the vision fades.

## J2f. Arrival

*You have survived the Rain of Colorless Fire and emerged from Slerotin's Passage. The new world before you offers countless regions that your group could claim as its new home. Some of the refugees wish to travel farther east in order to remain in the comfort of the near tropics, while others argue for heading north to lands less harsh.*

Ask the players where the PCs wish to lead their people and how they will go about settling in this world. Should they conquer the indigenous tribes? Or should they seek a place of their own? Observe each player's mannerisms. Any character whose player assumes an argumentative stance must attempt a DC 20 Intimidate check; a character whose player speaks softly and uses logic must attempt a DC 20 Diplomacy check. The first time anyone succeeds on the required check, the group gains 1 octych point, and the refugees follow that person's advice. If everyone fails, the refugees scatter, each seeking her own fate. Each PC gains 1d4 negative levels, and the vision ends.

## J2g. Binding

*You have found a place for your followers in the new world, yet this world is not safe. Power magic unleashed the Invoked Devastation and also brought about the Rain of Colorless Fire. The nine of you who stand here are the last who know its secrets, so your continued existence in this world is a threat. This place belongs to your people, not to you, so you have decided to leave for realms of your own making far beyond this world, where you can hide away your knowledge. Each of you has forged a key to your realm—a single triangular wedge called an octych—and now you stand together in the chambers below Castle Maure to jointly bind your worlds to this one. Only those who hold the correct octych can visit your world, and you shall await them in your realm to judge their worth.*

Ask each player to describe what his or her world is like. Once that player has done so, the character must attempt a DC 20 check involving a skill that would be of great import in the world. (Thus, an aquatic world might call for a Swim check, while a realm of towering mountains might call for a Climb check.) If any PC succeeds on this check, the ceremony is a success, and the group gains 1 *octych* point. Otherwise, the ceremony fails, and the eight *octychs* are scattered throughout the Multiverse. The vision fades, and every character takes 1d6+1 points of Constitution damage when his personal world tears free from his soul and is lost.

### J2h. Guardian

*Centuries have passed in your own realm, and now you have returned to the place where you once raised statues. Now, only dust remains, stretching to the choking red horizon. But suddenly you feel a presence nearby, and a memory long set aside rises from the sand before you. It is none other than Slerotin himself, returned from the dark recesses of time to judge you! "Why have you returned home?" he asks.*

Allow each character a chance to reply to the spirit of Slerotin. No matter what they say, Slerotin becomes enraged. Howling in anger, he informs the PCs that their return has awakened the spirit of a murdered nation, which now marches upon the world to finish what its people began so long ago. "The Invoked Devastation shall come again," he says, "and this time, none shall survive."

Each PC must attempt a level check (1d20 + character level). Multiply the lowest check result by the number of *octych* points the PCs have accumulated. If the result is higher than 88, the PCs manage to contain Slerotin's wrath—for now. Failure indicates that each character takes 2d4 points of damage to each ability score and is transported back to area J1.

### J2i. Octych

*You and your companions appear in a small stone chamber. In its center, a triangular wedge of orange metal no larger than a human's thumb floats in a pillar of white light. You recognize this wedge as an octych. If it is not the key to your own world, perhaps it opens that of a friend.*

As soon as a PC touches the *octych*, both the shaft of light and the fields of orange energy vanish. The hallway becomes an empty stone passage, and the visions the PCs received grow hazy, like distantly remembered dreams. Only the *octych* remains—a solid link to the trials they have endured. This item does indeed serve as a key to another world, but the details are left to you to decide.

If someone in the party is under the control of Norebo's Hand when the PCs obtain the *octych*, that individual insists on being the one to carry the object. The next time the characters reenter the City of Greyhawk, that character will do everything in his or her power to turn over the *octych* to the Thieves' Guild. (How this turn of events plays out is up to you, but at the least, giving the *octych* to

the thieves should cause Norebo's Hand to break its control over the afflicted character.)

## J3. CHAMBER OF THE ORB

The secret door (Search DC 35) in the wall just north of this chamber leads to area J4. Read tactical encounter 6–9 before reading the readaloud text below;

*Six of the seven walls in this chamber bear a life-sized, stained-glass portrait of a human adventurer, equipped for any task and standing in a pose that radiates power and confidence. The other wall might once have sported such a portrait, but now it is only a gaping hole in the wall surrounded by tiny flames, with broken glass on the floor in front of it. On a pedestal in the center of the room sits a polished silver sphere the size of a melon. A dead human female dressed in a form-fitting leather gown lies on the floor between the pedestal and the shattered portrait. In the southern end of the room are several copies of two of the men depicted in the portraits—the images of the man who sang stand on the ground, and those of the one armed with the rapier float in the air.*

These portraits depict the members of the Company of Seven, each identified by name on a bronze plaque below the picture. Clockwise beginning on the northeast wall, they appear as follows. The names on the plaques appear in parentheses after each description.

1. A wild-eyed man dressed in flowing robes, clutching an elegant painter's brush in one hand (Nolzur).
2. A thin man in a chain shirt, wielding a rapier surrounded by floating feathers (Quaal).
3. A handsome man wearing a chain shirt and a belt heavy with pouches who stands singing in front of a large pipe organ (Heward).
4. A wild-eyed man in a gray robe, holding his hands out to display the zigzag lines on his palms (Zagig).
5. Shattered (Tasha).
6. A man wearing exotic leather armor and a wide-brimmed hat, holding a device resembling a hand crossbow without a bow (Murlynd).
7. A lanky, bare-chested man in a martial stance (Keoghtom).

When Iggwilv's simulacrum came upon this room, she recognized her own face in the image of Tasha—a name that the real Iggwilv had used long ago, which might in fact be the one given her by her mysterious mother. The false Iggwilv shattered the window in anger, and in so doing released Ahsat, Tasha's double from a parallel but opposite world. Tasha was the only evil member of the Company of Seven; thus, her double was good. Ahsat quickly deduced what had occurred, realized that the false Iggwilv must be up to no good, and attacked her. Iggwilv slew Ahsat easily, then began to study the portraits. During the next few days, she discovered a way to release the other six doubles from their windows without breaking them and summoned them all forth. To her great delight, the doubles obeyed the commands of the one who had released them.

For a time, Iggwilv charged the remaining six with the task of guarding this level. After capturing Iuz, she realized that she no longer needed the *Godtrap* Key, so she dismantled it into its three components and entrusted them to Livashti, who in turn gave fragments to three of the doubles for safekeeping. Lyndurm (the double of Murlynd) took his fragment into the whimsical realm of Dungeonland; Rulzon (the double of Nolzur) chose the Isle of the Ape as his retreat; and mad Xagig (the double of Zagig) took his fragment into the depths of the Abyss, to Fraz-Urb'luu's realm Hollow's Heart. Now, only Komoghet, Wedrah, and Aluuq (the doubles of Keoghtom, Heward, and Quaal, respectively) remain. Wedrah and Aluuq spend much of their time in this chamber awaiting new orders from Livashti or Iggwilv; Komoghet is busy in area J4.

Destroying any of these stained glass portraits does not harm the associated duplicates now that they have been released.

**Tactical Encounter:** 6–9, Chamber of the Orb (page 202).

**Treasure:** The object on the pedestal is the *Orb of Opposition*—a strange artifact created by the Mirrormasters of Lynn. These old enemies of the Company of Seven once attempted to assassinate the Seven by sending oppositely aligned “mirror images” into their lair. Zagig and the rest couldn't bring themselves to kill these doubles, so they imprisoned them within the stained-glass portraits in this room for further study—and perhaps later rehabilitation. Fortunately for the PCs, these duplicates represent the legendary heroes in their youth, long before they ascended to quasi-deityhood.

The *Orb of Opposition*'s capacity to create duplicates was sapped when Iuz used it to call forth Robilar's double Bilarro and merge the two together. Bound to Iuz, the resultant entity became a powerful ally, and the Old One used him to set off the Greyhawk Wars. If a PC touches the nearly depleted sphere to Robilar/Bilarro, it grows cloudy, banishes the double, and restores the doughty fighter to his old self. (See page 188 for more information.)

## J4. GALLERY OF WONDER

*This huge chamber looks like an immense museum. A 10-foot-high catwalk encircles it, allowing visitors to walk the perimeter and gaze upon the incredible displays. On the stairs leading up to this catwalk stand several burly humans in studded leather armor. To the north hangs a skeletal black dragon in a fierce pose, and to the south, a 6-foot-long arm made of black metal hangs from mithral chains.*

Komoghet the Alchemist, the evil double of ancient Keoghtom, has taken a liking to this chamber. Rather than wait for new orders with his allies in area J3, he whiles away the time here, reading and studying.

When Komoghet hears the battle with the dragon in area J1, he reaches for the *iron horn of Valhalla* that he has claimed from one of the displays here. If he does not hear the dragon's triumphant roar when the sounds of battle

cease, he blows the horn, summoning 1d4+1 barbarian allies to aid him in defending this room.

The arm hanging along the southern wall is a fragment of the legendary Greyhawk artifact known as the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-O*. As soon as battle is joined, it disengages from the chains holding it and moves to the fray—but, as borne out in the tactical encounter, it might help the PCs at least as much as it hurts them.

**Tactical Encounter:** 6–10, Gallery of Wonder (page 204).

Once the PCs have dispatched the room's guardians, they are free to look around.

*Just beyond the spot where the arm once hung is a stone arch that resembles a classic druidic standing stone. The dozens of glass display cases scattered through the center of the room must once have held countless objects of wonder, but someone has smashed and looted them all. Below the spot where the dragon skeleton hung, several chairs are arranged around a low table atop which some books have been carefully stacked.*

**Treasure:** The false Iggwilv has looted most of the treasure once kept here (including the *staff of the magi* from one of the display cases). However, a thorough examination of the dragon skeleton (Search DC 30) reveals a fully charged *scarab of protection* lying neglected amid the rubble of a ruined case just southeast of it.

## J5. MINIATURE DISPLAYS

*Two alcoves enclosed by panes of glass look out into this hallway. Inside each is a miniature display of people equipped with various kinds of adventuring gear. The double doors to the north are closed, and the words “Turn back” have been painted upon them in large red letters.*

Each alcove contains nearly three dozen figures, each the size of a child's doll. Casual inspection reveals that each doll in the displays is dressed like an adventurer—and that one of them appears identical to the viewer. (If more than one character looks at the dolls, each PC sees a duplicate of himself or herself.) A successful DC 20 Spot check during an examination of the southern alcove reveals that one of the dolls is missing. (Lyndurm took it with him when he fled into Dungeonland with his *Godtrap* Key fragment.)

The glass cases are not trapped and can be opened normally or smashed. In the latter case, the glass re-forms in an hour. The dolls within are well made, and their equipment seems to be fully functional, though miniature. A character who claims his or her own doll feels a strange sense of completeness and foreboding, but the meaning of this sensation should not become clear until the PCs enter area J6 (see below).

## J6. THE PATH TO DUNGEONLAND

*The words “Go back! It's not too late!” have been painted in 9-foot-tall red letters on the northern wall of this hallway. To the west, the passage seems to go on forever, but about 20 feet down,*

*the stone walls are replaced by tree trunks. At the point where the walls change, a pair of playing cards dance on the ground, as if caught by an updraft of air.*

A successful DC 20 Spot check reveals that the cards are in fact miniature people who seem to have cards for bodies. The two cards immediately run off to the west once they spot intruders. This hallway leads into a demiplane called Dungeonland.

Any character who moves down the hallway beyond the point indicated on the map is immediately transported onto a forest path. The woods to the north and south are so dense as to be impassable, and a quick glance to the rear reveals that the hallway leading back to area J5 has vanished. Furthermore, with each step to the west, the characters' belongings seem to grow larger. In fact, the PCs are shrinking with each step. By the time they have progressed 100 feet along the hallway, they have shrunk to such an extent that their clothing and equipment collapses around them—but a character who was carrying his or her doll from area J5 discovers that the doll's gear is of a size that he or she can now use. A character who was not carrying a doll must deal with the perils of Dungeonland without clothing or equipment.

When one or more PCs reach this point, continue with the Dungeonland section that begins on the next page. This journey is a one-way route until the PCs recover the *Godtrap* Key fragment from Lyndurm; otherwise, only powerful magic such as a *gate* or *plane shift* spell allows escape from this demiplane. However, returning in such a manner does not restore the characters' gear. Their regular gear remains on the floor in area J6, and they appear at their destination normal-sized but without clothing or gear. If the PCs take too long in returning to this corridor for their belongings, they might find that Livashti has already claimed them.

## J7. THE HATEFUL HOLE

*This bare room seems somehow filled with a disembodied rage—a rage that grows stronger near a ruined bas-relief carving in the western wall. A disturbing shape has been carved out of the wall here—the vague form of a towering humanoid with bat wings and a hulking, gorillalike posture. This oddly shaped hole extends into the rock beyond the wall, forming an irregular passage that winds like a cave as far as the eye can see.*

Upon entering this room, each character must immediately succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become overwhelmed by the anger radiating from the walls. For the next 1d4 rounds, characters who failed the save perceive any other living creatures (including cohorts and other PCs, but excluding bound companions such as familiars, animal companions, and special mounts) as hated enemies. Affected characters are compelled to attack these “enemies” as long as they remain in sight and the rage persists. Once the duration expires, the rage that permeates the room can never again drive those particular characters to such extremes, but its presence does not fade from the room. This rage is a mind-affecting compulsion that can be dispelled (CL 20th).

The punctured western wall of this chamber is where Zagig (with the aid of a much younger Iggywilv) once captured and imprisoned Fraz-Urb'luu, the Demon Prince of Deception. The hole and the tunnel beyond were formed when the demon prince broke free and returned to Hollow's Heart, his Abyssal realm, and the rage is a tiny remnant of the fury that he unleashed upon his captors.

Brave PCs can navigate this tunnel to Hollow's Heart. If one of them carries Zagig's Key, the passage leads to the proximity of one of the *Godtrap* Key fragments, carried there only a few days ago by Xagig at Livashti's command. Otherwise, the tunnel leads to a random section of Hollow's Heart. Unlike the paths to Dungeonland (J6) and the Isle of the Ape (J9), this route is two-way, allowing the PCs to come and go from Hollow's Heart as they please.

## J8. THE EVERLORE PIT

*A mournful wail, like wind blowing over unseen rents in the earth, fills this chamber. Much of the floor is missing, revealing a vast and apparently bottomless pit. A 5-foot-wide ledge surrounds the pit, and a platform of stone extends out over its center.*

Zagig constructed this magic chamber, which he called the Everlore Pit, to contact powerful entities from other realms for advice. Anyone standing upon the central platform can use *contact other plane* at will. An image of the entity contacted rises from the pit below as if on a powerful updraft and hovers in the air before its summoner. This image is not the real creature, but it behaves as though it were in every way. The face-to-face nature of this contact grants the user a +2 bonus on the Intelligence check made to avoid the Intelligence and Charisma decrease when using the Everlore Pit to generate this spell effect.

If the PCs are still having trouble piecing together the false Iggywilv's plans, or can't seem to figure out how to stop her, you can use this room to give them hints about their next step.

## J9. PORTAL TO THE ISLE OF THE APE

*A narrow beach of white sand runs along the edge of a seemingly limitless ocean. The waves of this incongruous sea lap gently at the shore, and the sky overhead is blue and cloudless. Two outrigger boats lie partially beached on the sand about 20 feet away. A warm breeze carrying a whiff of salt spray blows gently toward the entrance.*

This chamber is a route to another of Zagig's favorite demiplanes—the Isle of the Ape.

Each of the outriggers can seat two Medium creatures or four Small creatures. A character who rows one out into the sea is transported to the ocean surrounding the Isle of the Ape, vanishing from the view of those remaining on shore. A replacement outrigger floats up onto the beach 1d4 rounds after the disappearance of an occupied one. This portal offers only a one-way trip; the PCs must recover the *Godtrap* Key shard hidden on the Isle of the Ape to return to Castle Greyhawk.

## J10. GALLERY OF ADVENTURE

*Each of the seven alcoves in this hall is decorated with an oversized landscape painting. Rendered with incredible detail, the scenes in these paintings are as varied as they are breathtaking.*

Each of these galleries contains seven paintings depicting locations that the Company of Seven visited through the ages. In the lower right corner of each painting is a small signature in a cramped hand that reads, “Nolzur.” These paintings all depict areas of great danger and great adventure. Some of the scenes—including the skull-decorated hill above Acererak’s Tomb of Horrors, the jungle-draped columns in the hidden city of Tamoachan, the arid and desolate Sea of Dust, the frozen Land of Black Ice, and the belching heights of White Plume Mountain—are recognizable to many adventurers. Others depict locations that are not familiar. Feel free to include any images that strike your fancy in these galleries.

Although each painting is masterfully rendered and would be worth thousands of gold pieces, all are magically bonded to this chamber. If a painting is removed from the room, it instantly rots away into dust, only to reappear once again in its proper place in the gallery.

Only one scene—an image of Castle Greyhawk—is duplicated in both arms of the gallery. These two paintings are actually cleverly hidden secret doors (Search DC 30) that lead to area J11. Since the false Iggwilv has locked both with *arcane lock* (CL 15th), *detect magic* also gives away their locations.

## J11. NEXUS CHAMBER

The secret door (Search DC 30) leading south into this chamber has been sealed with an *arcane lock* (CL 15th) by the false Iggwilv.

*Two identical C-shaped tables have been built into this chamber—one into the eastern wall, the other into the western. The top of each table is engraved with a complex network of glowing runes, one of which glows brightly.*

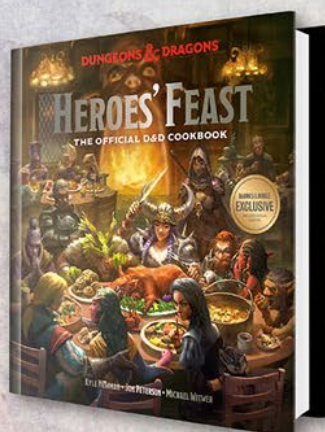
The four runes on each table are written in Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, and Infernal, often incorporating characters from all four languages into a single shape. A character who knows all four languages and studies the runes for at least 1 minute can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check. Success reveals the runes as phrases. Each table is engraved with the same four runes, which translate as “The Vaults of Creation,” “Crypts of the Forgotten,” “Tower of Zagig,” and “Zagig’s Prison”—the names of various dungeon levels below Castle Greyhawk. The rune for the Tower of Zagig glows on the western table, and the rune for Zagig’s Prison glows on the eastern one.

If any character traces the glowing rune on either table with his or her finger, all creatures in the room are instantly teleported to the corresponding level. Teleporting to the Tower of Zagig places the PCs on the surface, just in front of the ruined archway into the tower. Teleporting

to Zagig’s Prison transports the PCs to area N1 of that level (see page 183).

Not even the false Iggwilv has determined how to change which runes glow. When she found this place, she was relieved to see that one teleporter was already set to Zagig’s Prison, thus saving her the necessity of finding another route to her goal. If you wish to open up other levels of the dungeon to the PCs, you can reveal to them (perhaps through strange scrolls found in treasure mounds or in the pages of moldering books discovered in ancient libraries) the methods of activating the other runes on these tables.

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# The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

This issue we dig deep into Barovian soil to exhume content that compliments *Curse of Strahd*.



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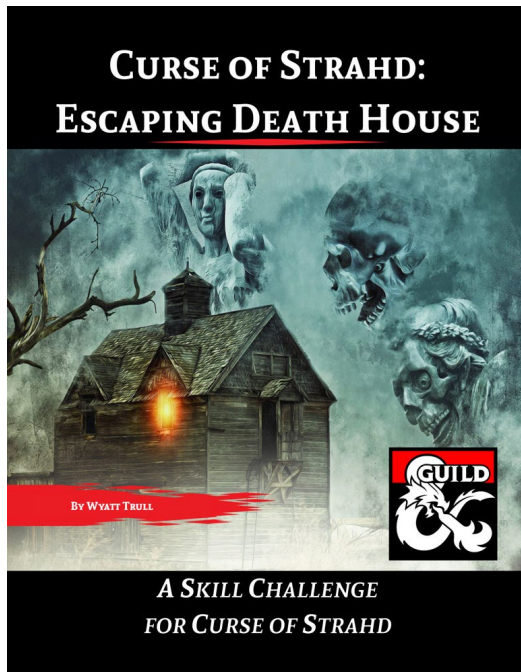
**I**t can't have escaped your attention that *Curse of Strahd*'s been *Revamped* (and if you did fail your Perception check, then beware—an entity as self-important as Strahd *really* doesn't appreciate being ignored). Even though the adventure already includes a rich, gothic environment, a legendary central character and a captivating wider cast, as well as a tragic love story that makes *Titanic* seem like *Captain Ron*, there can always be... more.

The talented contributors at the Dungeon Masters Guild have taken Count Strahd von Zarovich's tale and expanded it into parts of Barovia no sane party member should tread. Their content supports

the main story and also helps DMs flesh out this dark kingdom when they need bonus material.

We also recommend taking a look at the [Adventurers League guide for running \*Curse of Strahd\*](#), which contains some useful and fun information.

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Curse of Strahd: Escaping Death House Skill Challenge, by Wyatt Trull

Price: PWYW \$1.00 Suggested (PDF)

*Death House* is the introductory adventure module included in *Curse of Strahd* and features a number of possible endings. Wyatt Trull wanted to increase the playability of “The Cult is Denied” option, where the players traditionally make rolls to escape poisonous smoke and other dangers. The result is a skill

challenge where the characters must achieve five successes before accruing three failures if they want to escape the house’s nightmarish halls. Don’t worry if you’ve never used a skill challenge before as Wyatt fully explains the concept.

### [MORE INFO](#)

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Barovia Hand Drawn Maps

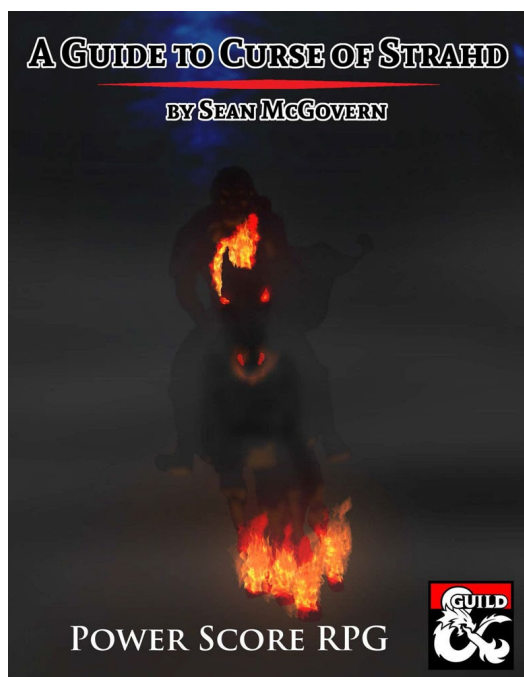
Price: PWYW \$1.00 Suggested (PDF)

These homemade maps are perfect for handing to players no matter how familiar they are with Barovia, as one includes location names and the other leaves them off. For ease of use they’ve even been created to be the same scale as the map included in the campaign book.



[MORE INFO](#)

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A Guide to Curse of Strahd, by  
Sean McGovern

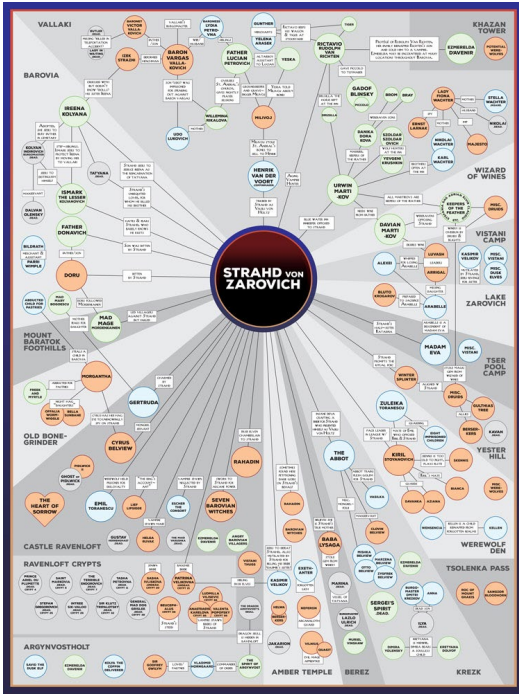
Price: PWYW \$2.00 Suggested  
(PDF)

Sean McGovern discusses everything a DM needs to know to successfully run *Curse of Strahd*. He explains how to use an outline to form a storyline path, and includes helpful advice such as using the wereravens to nudge players in the right direction if they need a hint. From tips such as handing out character levels at appropriate moments instead of

tallying experience, to using horror movie techniques to add flourishes to the adventure, it's packed with great advice.

[MORE INFO](#)

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Curse of Strahd: NPC Map for  
Dungeon Masters, by Carl Huber  
Price: PWYW \$0.75 Suggested  
(PDF)

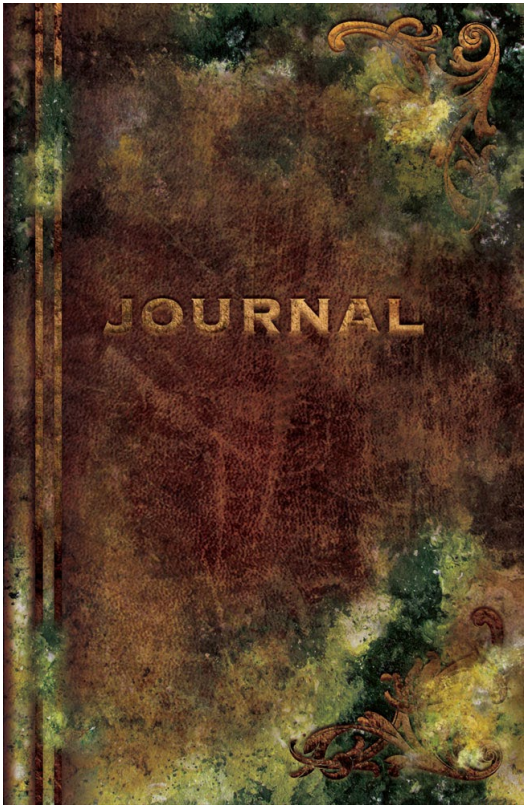
On the surface, *Curse of Strahd* appears to be a fairly straightforward adventure: find some items, slay the big, bad bloodsucker. Yet many of the NPCs the players encounter have interrelated stories, and as a DM you need to remember which are relatives, members of shadowy groups, friends, enemies, hunters and hunted, estranged children,

long lost lovers, the dead returning for vengeance, and those who are drunk and seeking their fortunes. The fact that Carl Huber's cheat-sheet map has racked up more than 10,000 downloads on the DMs Guild shows you just how useful it is!

## MORE INFO

Curse of Strahd: The Abbot's Journal, by Carl Huber  
Price: PWYW \$0.75 Suggested (PDF)

One of those characters you'll be keeping track of using the NPC map is the Abbot in the Abbey of St Markovia. This printable resource (including a full color version and a simplified B&W version to save ink) brings his story more fully to life by allowing DMs to share pages of his journal with the players. Entries include some major plot points, such as the creation of the



mongrelfolk.

MORE INFO



THE MIST & THE WOOD

*What belongs in the Mist?*

The area surrounding the city of Philan has been dramatically different ever since the Maimed Virulence, Vorgansharax, fought back against the combined efforts of the Harpers, Zhentarim, Emerald Enclave, Order of the Gauntlet, and the Lord's Alliance. Heavy mists crawled from the Quivering Forest and grip the land, choking out joy and happiness, and the elves have begun whispering of strange noises and a lack of woodland creatures.

*An expansion for DDAL04-02 The Beast*



by Alan Patrick  
Associate Community Manager

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The Mist & The Wood

DDAL04-02 The Beast (5e)  
Expansion, by AL Admins  
Price: PWYW \$0.50 Suggested  
(PDF)

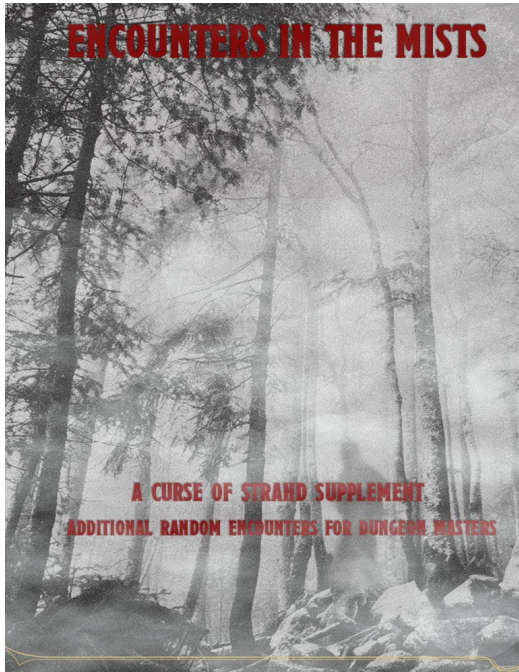
Players loved the D&D Adventurers League organized play season that focused on *Curse of Strahd*, particularly the module *DDAL04-02 The Beast*. In response, the AL administrators have provided additional insight into the construction of the setting, with specific details for those looking to explore the tiny mountain village of Orasnou and

the ominous Svalich Woods in Barovia, as well as the Quivering Forest in the Forgotten Realms. This supplement includes new campaign setting information, key NPC summaries, hooks specific to

every major faction, and story ideas for characters that may already be in Barovia.

### MORE INFO

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Encounters in the Mists—  
Additional Random Encounters  
for DMs, by Hugh McCluskey  
Price: PWYW (PDF)

Not for the squeamish—a bit like the rest of *Curse of Strahd* then—Hugh McCluskey’s twenty possible encounters in Barovia range from the intentionally goofy (Strahd’s foolish jester) to creepy (a crying, ghost child) and disturbing (using Vistani blood as a method of escape). Perfect for DMs looking to add extra woe to their players’ plight.

### MORE INFO

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Curse of Strahd: Underhill, by  
Carl Huber  
Price: \$1.50 (PDF)

All of these evil druids and berserkers hanging out on top of Yester Hill have to live somewhere. Time for a cave encounter! This expanded view of the *Curse of Strahd* scenario includes full color maps of the cave system (with and without grids) and Roll20-compatible tokens for the two named enemies.

## Q&A: Carl Huber

It's surprising to find that Carl Huber lives in Rochester, New York as *Dragon+* almost expected him to be connecting on Zoom from Barovia. His name comes up time and time again on the DMs Guild for material relating to *Curse of Strahd* and he explains the difficult (but rewarding) task of mapping relationships in Vallaki.

### **What's your relationship with *Curse of Strahd*, because you've created a lot of material relating to the adventure?**

My school friends and I played Dungeons & Dragons in the late '80s and '90s. But when we all went off to college, we lost contact, and that stopped. A couple of years after college we got back in touch and since we remembered having so much fun playing D&D back in the day, I thought we should do it again. This was right after fifth edition came out. Our previous Dungeon Masters didn't want to DM this time so I took that job on, and I'd seen this great looking module, called *Curse of Strahd*. It all started there.

### **What is it about *Curse of Strahd* that fires your creative juices?**

I love the setting and all of the encounters. The best analogy I can come up with is that any great recipe always has some innovation and tweaking as you add your own spices. As both a graphic designer and a marketing guy, it falls right in my wheelhouse to design these fun, different encounters, charts, and even wine labels for *Curse of Strahd*. It's been a pleasure to create content for it.

I love expanding on little things, whether that's to make something clearer or to introduce a new story point. I also like giving Dungeon Masters an excuse to incorporate Strahd into the narrative. I've read a lot of comments online where DMs ask, "Where do I introduce Strahd? How do I bring him into the story? What's the first place he should appear?" A couple of the encounters I developed for *Random Encounters on the Old Svalich Road* were designed specifically to get more Strahd in there. The storyline provides such a rich framework that there's plenty of opportunity for expansion.

**Some of your extensions feel very organic. There are evil druids**

**and berserkers hanging out on a hilltop, so let's expand that to include the cave where they live...**

There was an opportunity to create a larger backstory for the Yester Hill druids. At the very least, I wanted to give them this cave system where they hang out so they're not just a bunch of druids standing on a hilltop—although there's nothing wrong with that idea of them.

**You've also written a full adventure using material connected to the Stained Abbey...**

That seemed like such fertile ground for story expansion. What goes on at this abbey on top of this massive cliff? And what effect does that have on the town below? What does the Abbot do with golems and other creations that he's not pleased with? I can't imagine that this is his first rodeo and that he made Vasilka on his first attempt so he must have some failed experiments.

It's then possible to expand that into the landscape of Barovia and use the entire cliffside, taking in sewer systems that go down into natural caves, eventually becoming a space created from this great decomposed husk of a whale that got stuck in the cave system. I love coming up with these complex, interrelated storylines that make sense. It's not simply: go here, kill this thing. Everything comes full circle and is part of an ecosystem.

**The map detailing the relationships of the NPCs in Barovia has been hugely successful...**

It was purely self-serving, initially. The need to organise the data for myself was what got me started, because I was having trouble keeping track of everything in *Curse of Strahd*. I'm a graphic designer, my father was an engineer, and his father was an engineer, so with that kind of background I like organizing data. I was struggling to order how all these things interrelate because there are so many connections, especially in Vallaki. I needed to see it visually—here's a line that goes between the characters showing those interrelationships and their motivations. Who's evil, who's good, who's neutral? Who ties into Rahadin?

Then I saw people on Reddit and other places asking, "How do I prep for Vallaki?" I thought that if other DMs had similar needs, I could share that graphic on the Dungeon Master's Guild. I don't remember which came first but either that NPC map or the *Curse of Strahd* wine

labels were the first thing I uploaded there.

**And that NPC map has now been downloaded more than 10,000 times?**

I'm flummoxed by that number! I'm always pleasantly taken aback by how well my content has been received.

**Will we see you branch out from Barovia and into other regions and adventures? Might a trip to Icewind Dale be on the cards?**

I certainly hope so. There's so much great content available for fifth edition and I believe next we'll either be running *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* or *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*. I have no plans to stop creating and the sky's the limit as long as people keep appreciating it.

**You can find plenty more fifth edition content supporting *Curse of Strahd* by visiting [Carl Huber's author page](#) on the DMs Guild.**

## Download *Curse of Strahd: Beneath the Stained Abbey* for free!

Howls rend the air, cascading over Krezk. But they are only the outward signs of trouble at St. Markovia's Abbey. Beneath the Abbey itself, behind an imposing cliff face, lie secret chambers long abandoned to horrors. And through these caves and sewers flows a steady stream of "filth" directly into the secluded town below—material that is purified and rendered "safe" at the last minute. That is, until a party of travelers arrives and unknowingly set events in motion which may ultimately doom every fearful inhabitant of the frosty mountain town.

*Dragon+* is offering you the chance to download the PDF version of *Curse of Strahd: Beneath the Stained Abbey*, by clicking the link below. It will remain free for the life of this issue. Enjoy!

**[DOWNLOAD THE FREE PDF](#)**

## FIRESIDE WITH PETER ADKISON

You might be familiar with Wizards of the Coast founder and CEO of Gen Con Peter Adkison's fireside chats with the early creators of Dungeons & Dragons and *Magic: The Gathering*. In the newest season of *Fireside with Peter Adkison*, presented by the Dungeon Masters Guild, he talks to pivotal writers, editors, and designers creating a new wave of Dungeons & Dragons.

Peter recently interviewed copyeditor, game designer, graphic designer—and em-dash addict Laura Hirsbrunner. Laura explores dungeons and slays daelkyr in her free time (because really, dragons aren't the bad guys), accompanied by her paladin husband and their two gibbering mouthlings. Her DMs Guild work includes the adamantine best-seller *Exploring Eberron* by Keith Baker, as well as *Eberronicon*, *Archetypes of Eberron*, and much more.



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## DESIGN THOUGHT: PLUG IN CONTENT

As we've seen with the DMs Guild content highlighted above, the rich source of material packed into major Dungeons & Dragons adventures provides an ideal opportunity for authors to write supporting content. Whether it's helping Dungeon Masters navigate the politics of a particular location or providing additional encounters a DM can quickly drop into the game's environment, there's a lot that

can be bolted onto a significant release.

These larger settings often contain brief mentions of people, places, and events that help spark creative ideas. Carl Huber (interviewed above) looked at hilltop dwelling druids and berserkers in *Curse of Strahd* and wondered, “Where do they live?” Adventurer’s Wanted UK (now rebranded as **Roll Together**) ran a three-day campaign live at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe based on the brief description of Landgrave’s Folly provided in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*. *Dragon+* Editor-in-Chief Matt Chapman read the description of Renwick the lich in *Princes of the Apocalypse* and embedded the character more fully into his campaign. Even the smallest nugget of information can lead to a rich seam.

Whenever you get the impulse to find out more about a topic that’s briefly mentioned, you can bet you’re not the only DM tantalized by that information. Posting content expanding those snippets on the DMs Guild may pay dividends for content creators.

Dungeon Masters don’t always have the time they need to prep a session. Using readymade material that’s specific to an adventure can help them flesh out their campaigns and keep their parties entertained with minimal fuss. Perhaps they need an encounter or a side quest that’s specific to a region (such as Barovia, Theros or Eberron) and they don’t want their players to feel as if they’ve left that particular world behind.

A ready-made plug in helps DMs fill that gap, especially if they’re low on prep time that week. Providing that service should hopefully have the added benefit of making your work on the DMs Guild more desirable. The best content should plug in as if it was already part of the adventure and the acid test of its success is that the players can’t tell where the original adventure ends and the material you’ve added on top begins.

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## SUPPORT EXTRA LIFE!

Join Muk and his friend Birdsquirrel for their next adventure in Dankwood, as our crafty goblin teams up with the archmage Tasha to bring you more fun activities and adventure ideas.



This activity book, for players of all levels, has been lovingly crafted and illustrated by this issue's cover star, Emi Tanji. It includes puzzles, enjoyable adventure hooks written by Adam Lee, and unique Dankwood critters developed by Chris Lindsay. Each page is also made to be colored and enjoyed, so let the adventure begin!

Best of all, the monies that Wizards of the Coast and the Dungeon Masters Guild receive from sales of this PDF are donated to Extra Life in support of its local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Your purchase of this adventure goes to a truly great cause!

[Buy Muk's Guide to Everything He Learned From Tasha](#)

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BACK TO TOP



The Dead Milkmen: Lost Tomb of  
the Bitchin' Chimera

## Andrew Ervin explains how his comedy one-shot adventure written for friends became the official D&D module for the punk band.

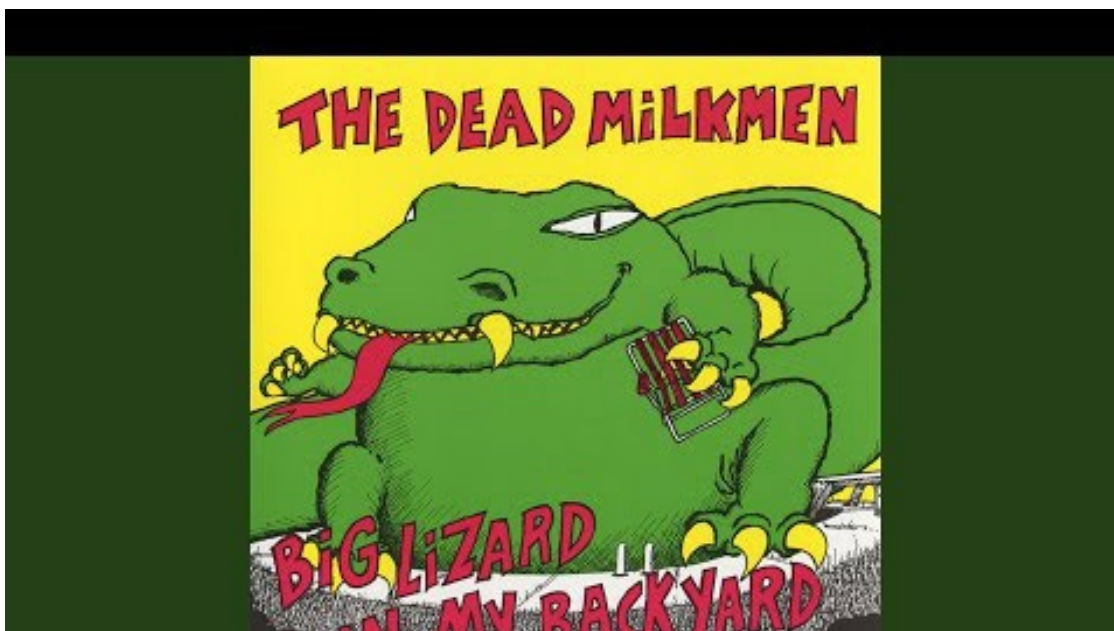
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**I**nspiration comes from many sources. Any Dungeon Master worth their sodium chloride will tell you that even the smallest gag or silliest pun can provide rich material for a Dungeons & Dragons campaign. That was the case for The Dead Milkmen superfan Andrew Ervin, who used the band's song "*Bitchin' Camaro*" as the basis for a playable module. And he chose the perfect venue to debut *Lost Tomb of the Bitchin' Chimera*.

"The Dead Milkmen [vocalist and keyboardist Rodney Anonymous, guitarist and co-lead vocalist Joe Genaro, bassist Dan Stevens, and drummer Dean Clean] continue to perform and record, and they hold an annual concert not too far from where I live in northwest Philadelphia, in a stunningly beautiful cemetery called **Laurel Hill** that also functions as an arboretum. Everyone brings coolers and the whole thing is a great outdoor party where about 1,000 people sit out on this big hill, looking down onto the front of the mausoleum," Ervin tells *Dragon+*.

"I had the idea of getting there a little early and playing a game of Dungeons & Dragons with a couple of friends. It seemed like the perfect place. The band's drummer, Dean Clean, got us permission to go into the cemetery and we set up during the soundcheck to play the game. We needed that extra time because even a one-shot can go off the rails and the more gonzo the material, the more likely that's going to happen.

"I also knew the point it would get dark, so I brought along sets of glow-in-the-dark dice. At some point in the adventure the players were going to enter a burrow where it would also be dark, and I referred to those dice as *glow stones* in the module."



## ORIGIN STORY

That one-off, one-shot experience on a hill overlooking the gig has now blossomed into a fifth edition module that's been officially sanctioned by the band themselves. Yet it shouldn't surprise anyone that The Dead Milkmen is involved with the world's favorite roleplaying game as their roots can be traced back to a homemade RPG, long before the band members ever played Dungeons & Dragons. Genaro and his neighbor Garth created a game in the summer of 1978 that directly led to the formation of The Dead Milkmen conceptual band.



Dead Milkmen prototypes (select to view)

“We called the game *Billboard Hot 100* and it was based on the singles chart in *Billboard* magazine. It was derived from the DIY baseball card games that were circulating at the time. The concept was that each player managed pop artists with the goal being to manipulate their singles up the charts. There were dice and playing cards, and as players circled the board the combination of the rolls they made and the

cards they drew drove the singles up or down the chart,” he explains, adding that *Monopoly* money was used to handle ad buys and payola, and represent single sales.

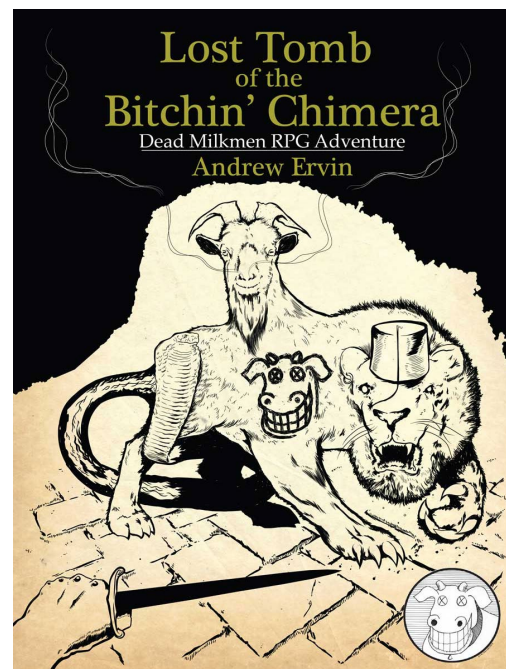
“Each player got to create their own pop artist or characters in a band and the Jack Talcum character came from that game. Rectangular slips of paper were used to record the song titles and artists names and those were moved up and down the chart in the middle of the board. The game had nothing to do with Dungeons & Dragons since I had yet to meet Rodney and play D&D. But Garth and I developed the idea for The Dead Milkmen directly after that playing experience and the Jack Talcum character became the punk band’s front man.”

## BIG LIZARD

Ervin didn’t reveal to his friends that they were about to embark on an adventure flavored with elements taken from The Dead Milkmen’s material until they gathered on that hillside. While there were no shortage of jokes and puns to mine from the band’s lyrics and song titles to create that evening’s fun, when he started working on a published version he decided to dig a lot deeper into their back catalogue.

“I started playing D&D when the *Basic Set* came out and I’ve been drawing maps on graph paper for as long as I can remember. I’ve also been writing a collaborative module with a friend for years and have created a few short games, but it never occurred to me to attempt to publish something,” he says.

“By writing this module I was originally only trying to entertain a few friends for a couple hours. It was very easy to pull enough material together when this was one night’s entertainment as the ethos and the style of the band lent itself to the foundation of this



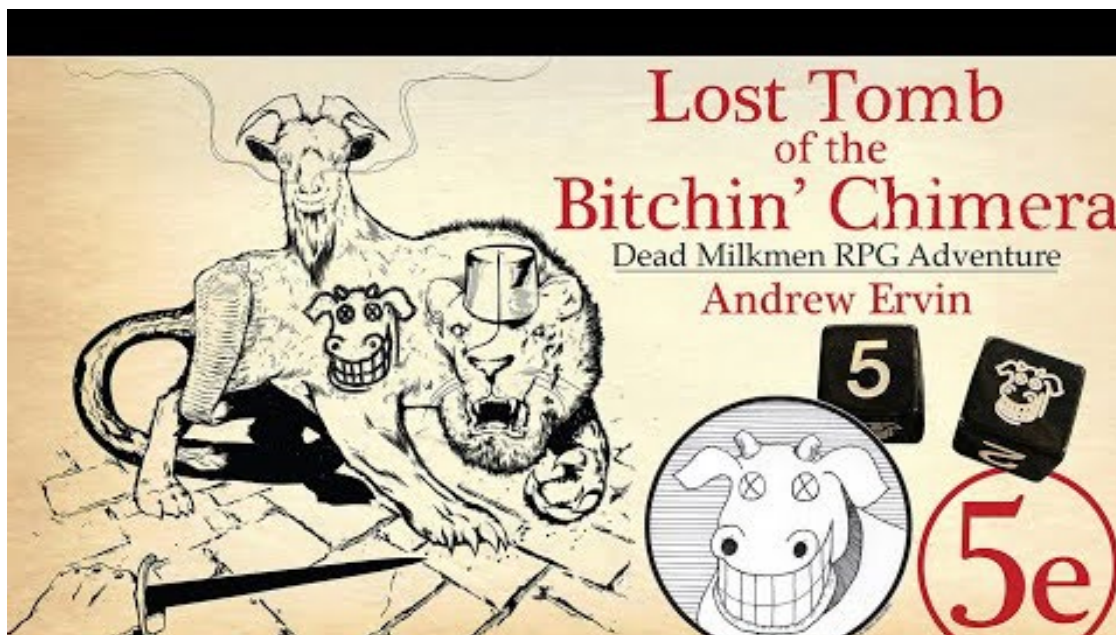
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game very naturally. But once I knew this would be published, I expanded upon it.

“And there are so many great characters and so much great material in those songs once you dig into them. There are monsters, a woman who is also a mongoose, the thing that only eats hippies, and the big lizard! In one of the band’s more infamous songs, “*Stuart*”, a kid is looking in a tree for his burrow owl, which I changed to be a burrow owlbear.”

While it was easy to tap such a deep well of material and find references that translated into Dungeons & Dragons, Ervin says the real trick is that his adventure module is not a gimmick.

“Although we think of The Dead Milkmen as humorous, they’re amazing musicians and truly talented people. I felt that if I were to do right by them I had to make something that is fun, silly, and ridiculous, but still with an element of seriousness to it. I’ve taken the RPG mechanics very seriously to ensure that D&D players have fun with this, even if they don’t immediately understand every reference. On one hand, it’s still a joke designed to make a couple of my friends laugh. But I think it’s also going to appeal to those who want to play a different kind of module.”

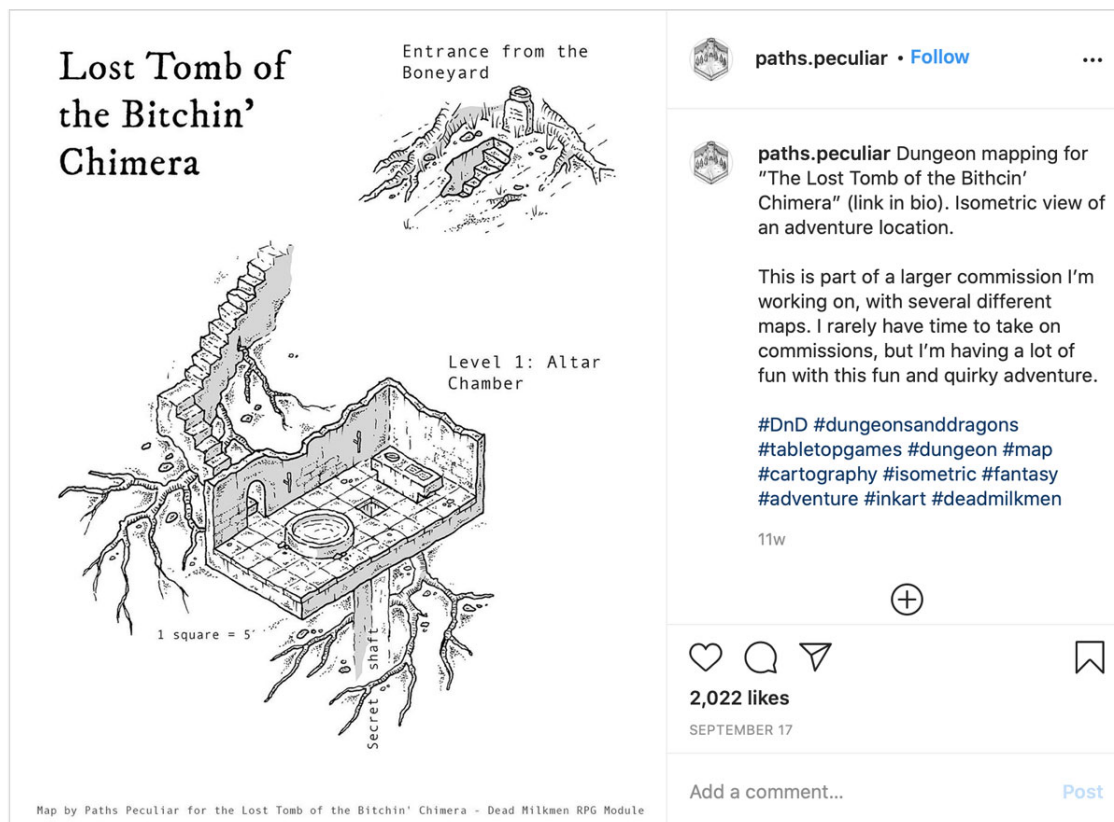


## ADDED EXTRAS

Ervin has also been working with a cartographer to add professional

maps to the module. Stockholm-based artist Niklas Wistedt, who works under the name **Paths Peculiar**, has been creating those images and Ervin says the module has evolved as they've worked together.

“Niklas doesn't usually take on commissions so we're lucky to have him and I was excited to work with him. He's a really interesting artist and I want to frame those maps he's creating for us and put them up on my office wall,” Ervin says. “Since launching the Kickstarter we've also added the kind of big folding map that used to appear in older D&D box sets.”



“Kickstarter backers also have the chance to add limited-edition T-shirts to their order. I love the image of the three-headed cow on the front of that T-shirt and obviously the chimera is a big part of the module. Its heads can either be randomly generated or the DM can pick whichever heads they prefer. That includes anything from cows, lizards, and jellyfish to a Charles Nelson Reilly head!”

The fundraising campaign to secure the creation of Lost Tomb of the Bitchin' Chimera also offered an extra-special opportunity for a select few backers. Ten über fans will be included in the supplement as undead versions of themselves as part of a group known as the “Big Time Operators”. Ervin will create stat blocks for each of those

undead characters, paired with original artwork by Publisher Justin Sirois.

Another fourteen backers have also agreed to be in a supplementary bestiary, called the Tome of the Pale Cow. That addition will feature approximately fifty monsters total, including the Order of the Pale Cow (as the additional fourteen backers are known) and the Undead Milkmen themselves.

“One of those backers is Wil Wheaton. He’s a Dead Milkmen fan and friends with Dean Clean the drummer, so he jumped in right away. We’re going to have an undead Wil Wheaton, which is very cool.”

It’s fascinating to see the evolution of a module that started life as a one-shot game for fans of a punk band, which itself was formed thanks to an RPG based on the music industry. So what became of the Billboard Hot 100 game, which The Dead Milkmen’s Genaro created for his friends?

“I wish we still had it but it’s gone,” he admits. “We played the game for a few days with kids from the neighborhood but they eventually got bored with it because we never made an ending, like the first person to accrue X amount of dollars or to get five number-one singles was the winner. It was a work in progress that we never finished.”

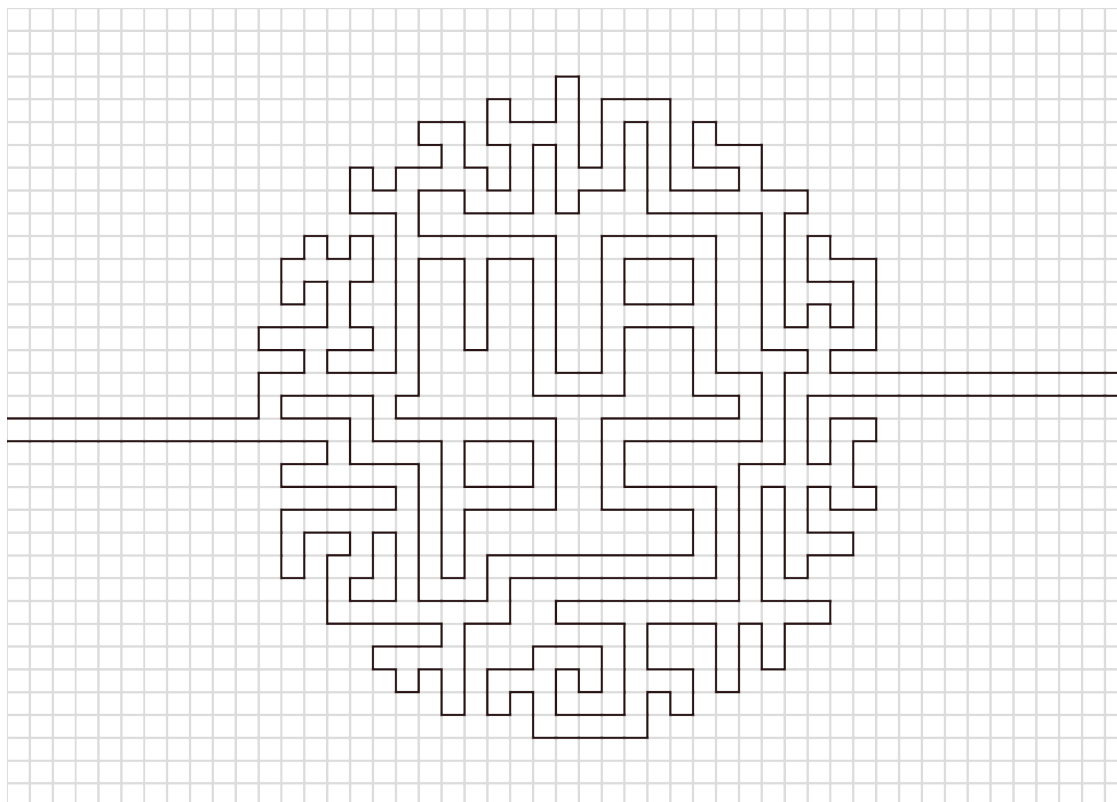
*Lost Tomb of the Bitchin' Chimera* is published by Severed Books and will be released to Kickstarter backers in February 2021. It can be [pre-ordered here](#).

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BACK TO TOP

# Maps of the Month: Icewind Dale

In the spirit of the season, we've collected a few more maps for games taking place in any icy dale.



*WARNING: THESE MAPS MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS FOR ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN, STORM KING'S THUNDER AND MYTHIC ODYSSEYS OF THEROS.*

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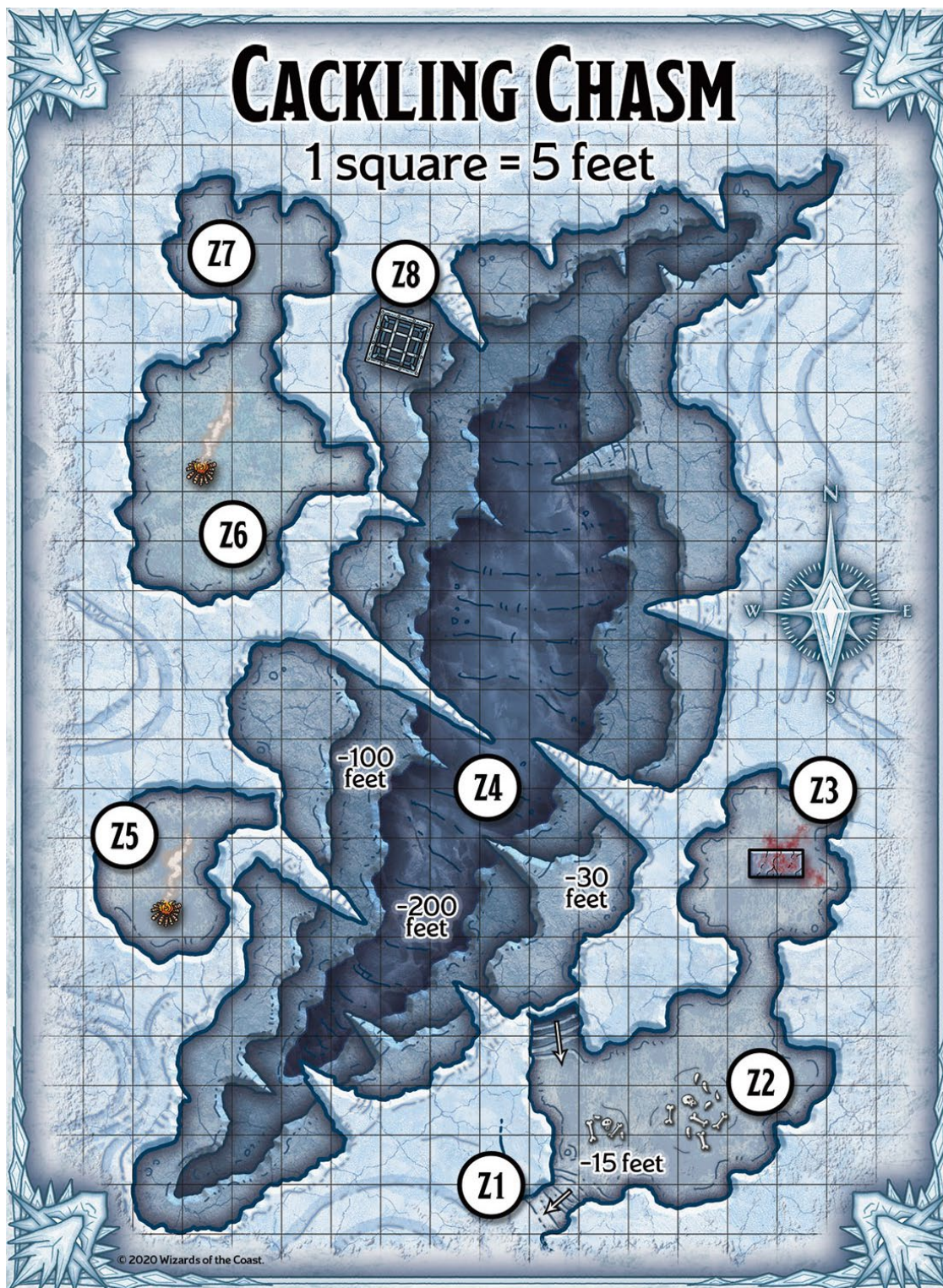
## ICEWIND DALE

In the previous issue we focused on some of the scarier locations within *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* and as we've now celebrated the official start of winter, we turn to more of that region's wintry locations, in a campaign that's as stacked with snow and ice.

Below you'll find several maps showing off Icewind Dale's places of interest, and whenever possible we've included untagged versions for use in any other icy adventures you may have planned!

## Cackling Chasm

There are glacial rifts of frost giants, and then there's this chasm ripped into the foothills of the Spine of the World. Whoever hears the maniacal sounds emanating from within knows well enough to stay away, as the chasm gets its name from the cackling gnolls that take shelter inside. Sadly, these gnolls are not laughing from any sense of holiday cheer; rather, they're emaciated and hungry, their laughing brought on by crazed starvation.



(Select to view)

[DOWNLOAD TAGGED](#)

[DOWNLOAD UNTAGGED](#)

# Karkolohk

Now here's a more festive place! A holiday village with plenty of roaring fires. Hmm... no, actually this appears to be a goblin prison-fort clinging to an icy crag. Instead of delivering gifts, these goblins launch raids against caravans traveling to and from Ten-Towns and mount hunting expeditions across the tundra. Which places them most definitely on the naughty list.



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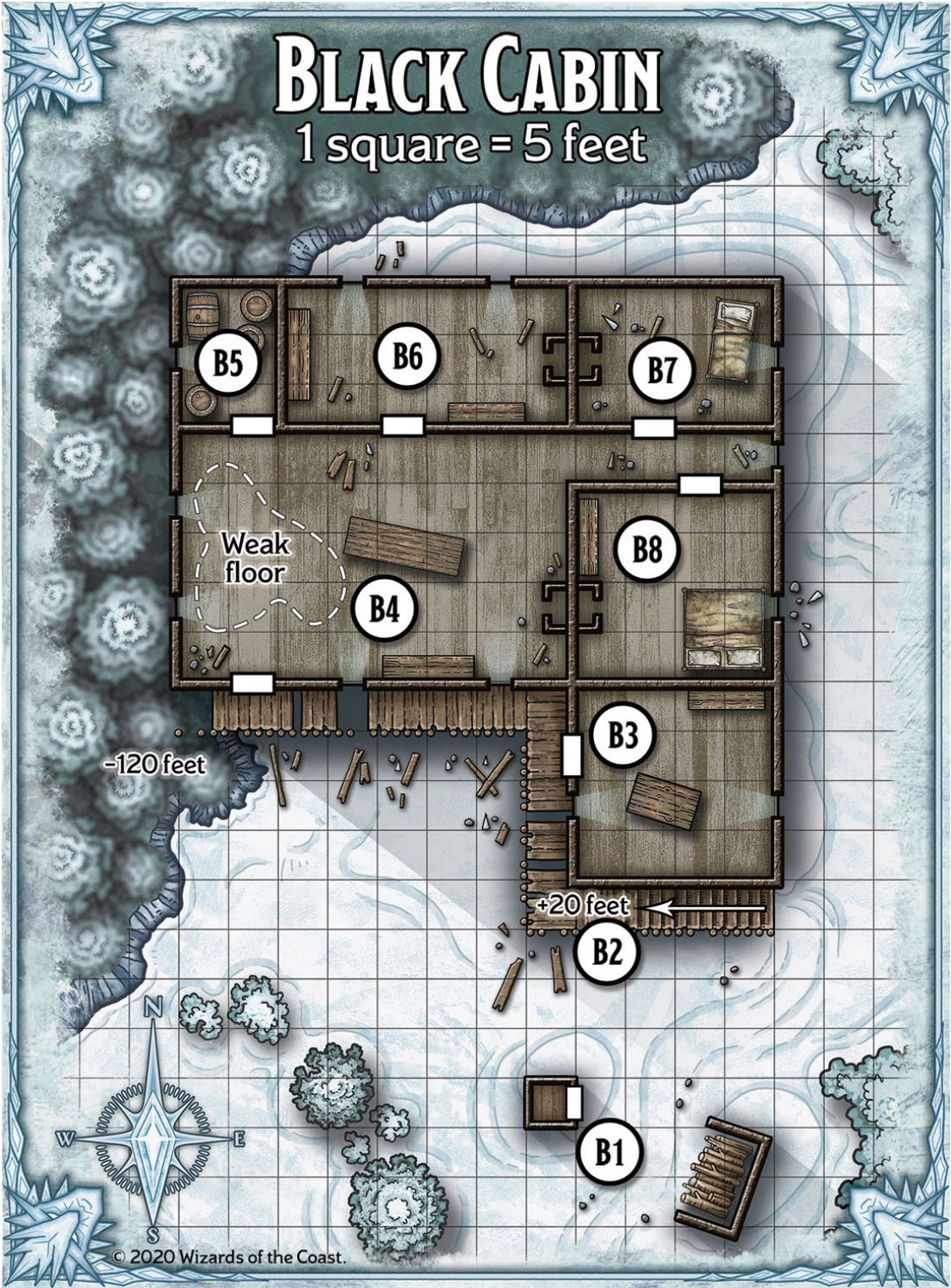
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## The Black Cabin

Finally! This looks promising—a cabin built by a ranger of the Far North long before the founding of Ten-Towns. When he moved on, the lodge became a refuge for others seeking sanctuary from the sweeping wind. What a welcome retreat to spend the night. Wait... there's rumors of it being haunted? By three spirits or just the ranger's?



(Select to view)

DOWNLOAD TAGGED

DOWNLOAD UNTAGGED

*Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* is available now with an

**MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. Also available as a digital version at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**.**

---

## MORE LANDS OF ICE AND SNOW

As if those frozen locations weren't enough to celebrate the spirit of these wintry days, we've collected a few other maps that are perfect for games taking place in Icewind Dale (or any icy dale, for that matter).

### Storm King's Thunder: Great Worm Cavern

In this far-ranging adventure, the Great Worm tribe of Uthgardt barbarians occupy a spacious cavern deep in the Spine of the World. As part of your *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* campaign, you might have players encounter their Great Worm Cavern—where thick ice hangs above the pillared entrance and the interior walls are lined with massive icicles that gleam and glitter in reflected light.



(Select to view)

[DOWNLOAD TAGGED](#)

[DOWNLOAD UNTAGGED](#)

## Dungeon 162: Winter of the Witch

This epic adventure takes place in Winterhaven and surrounding regions, many of which are locked in a wintry embrace. As such, these maps could easily be worked into Icewind Dale and its environs. We've collected the adventure maps into a zipped package:

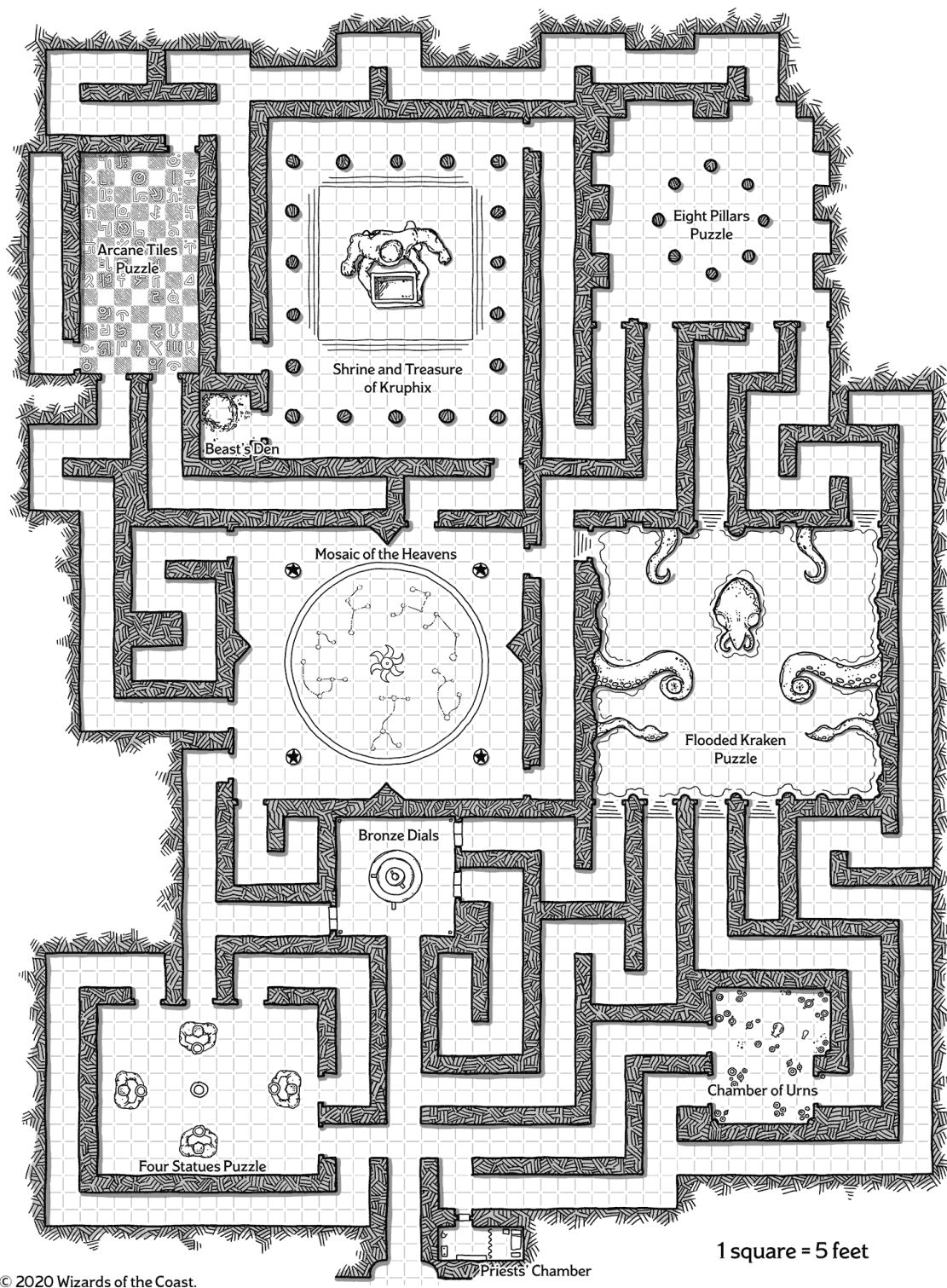
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---

## MYTHIC ODYSSEYS OF THEROS

Finally, with all of the puzzles arriving in Tasha's Cauldron of Everything, we wanted to offer the following Temple of Mystery map. Appearing in Mythic Odysseys of Theros, a temple of mystery is an enigmatic location full of puzzles and traps found in remote regions of Theros. Some scholars claim the temples aren't stationary and that finding a shrine's location is the first puzzle that explorers must solve (fans of Krull might look to consult the Widow of the Web).



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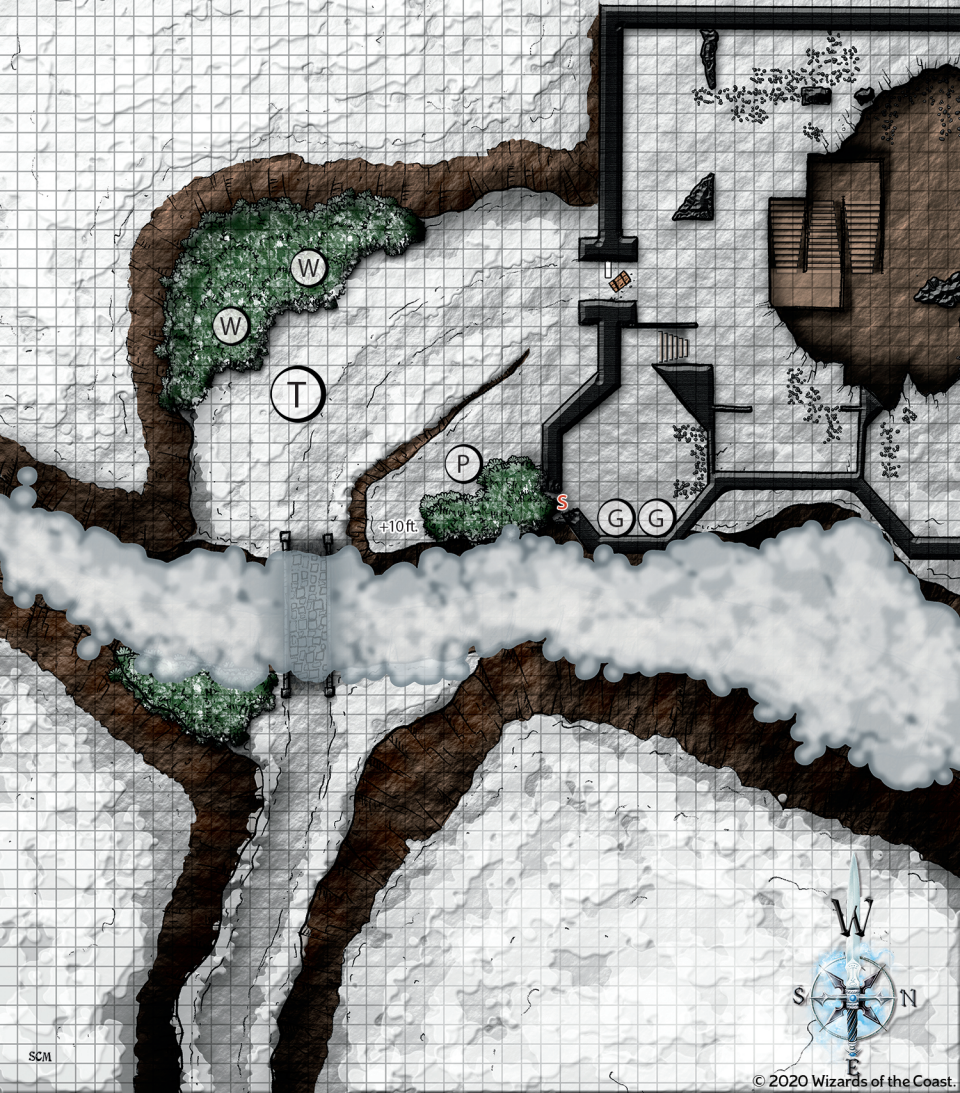
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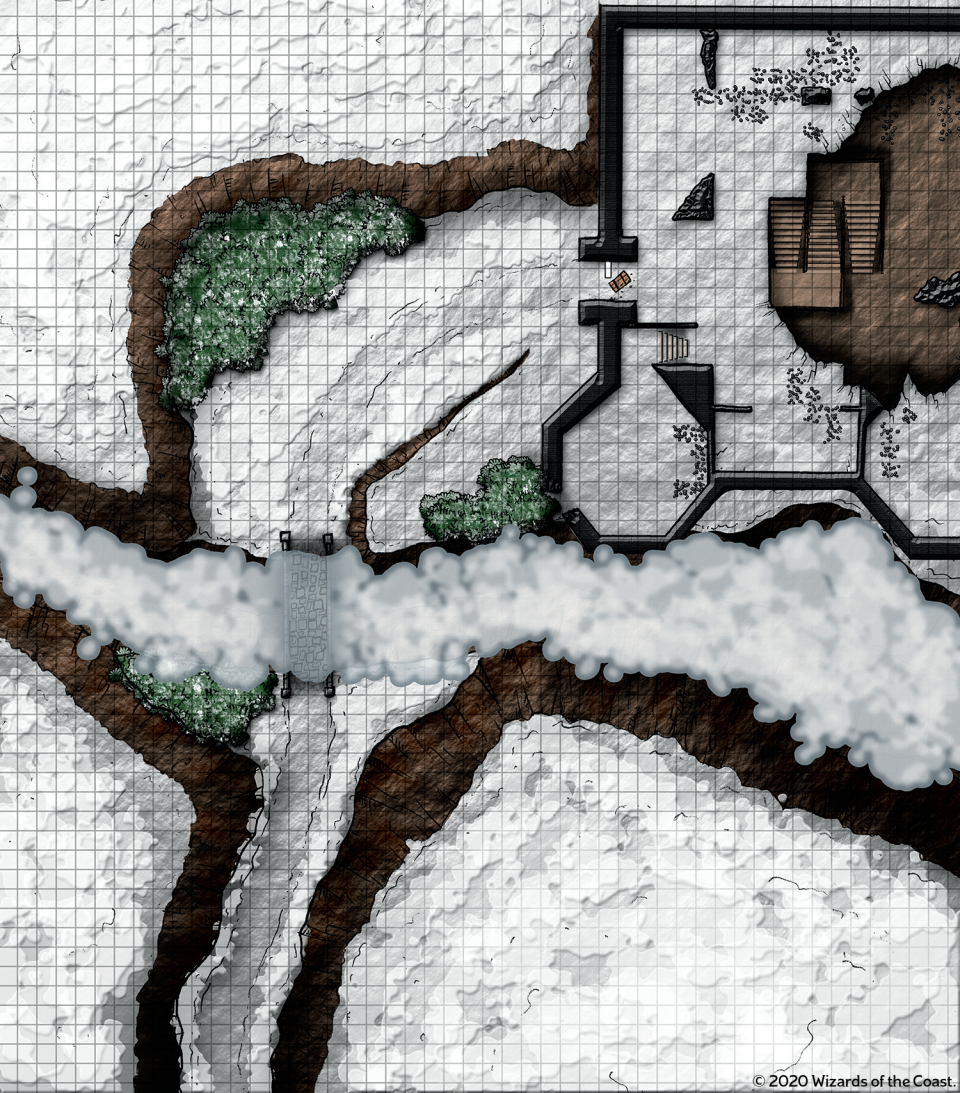
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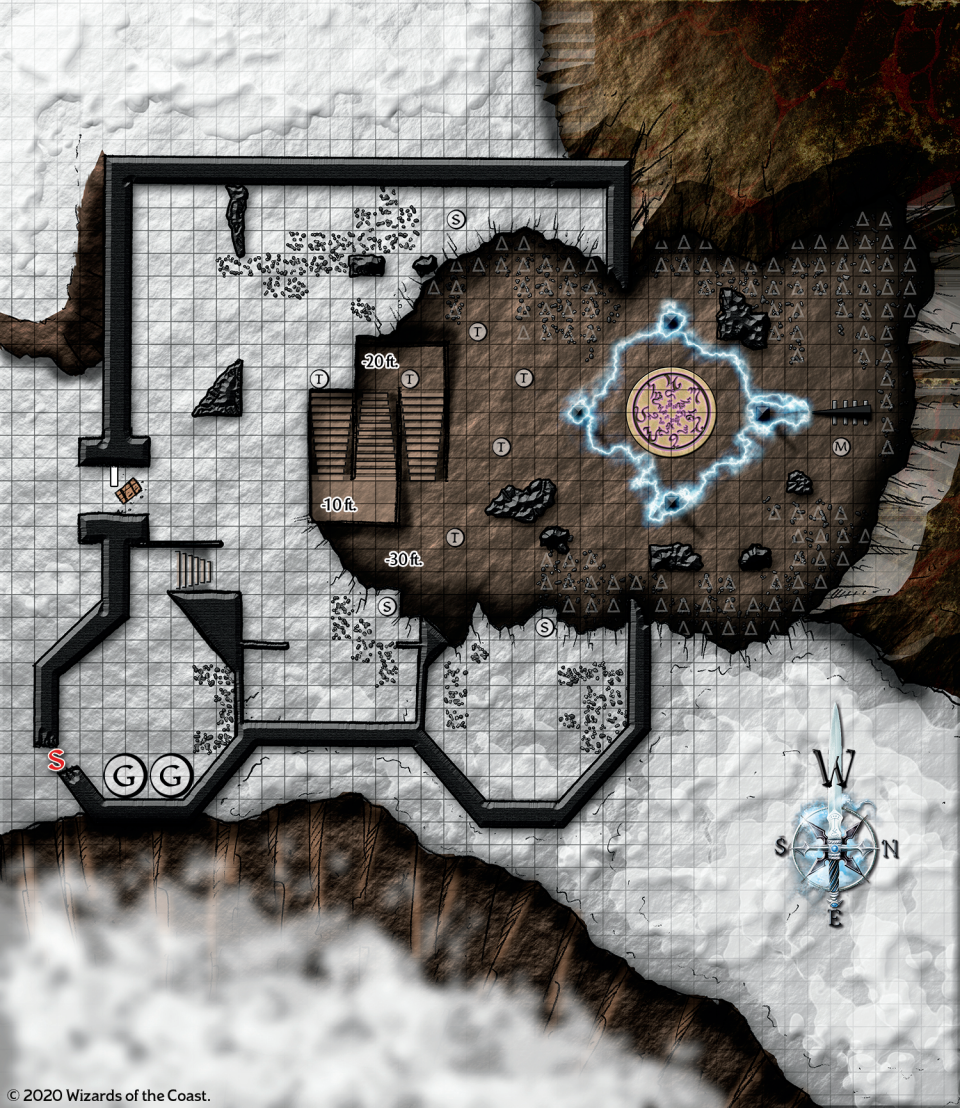
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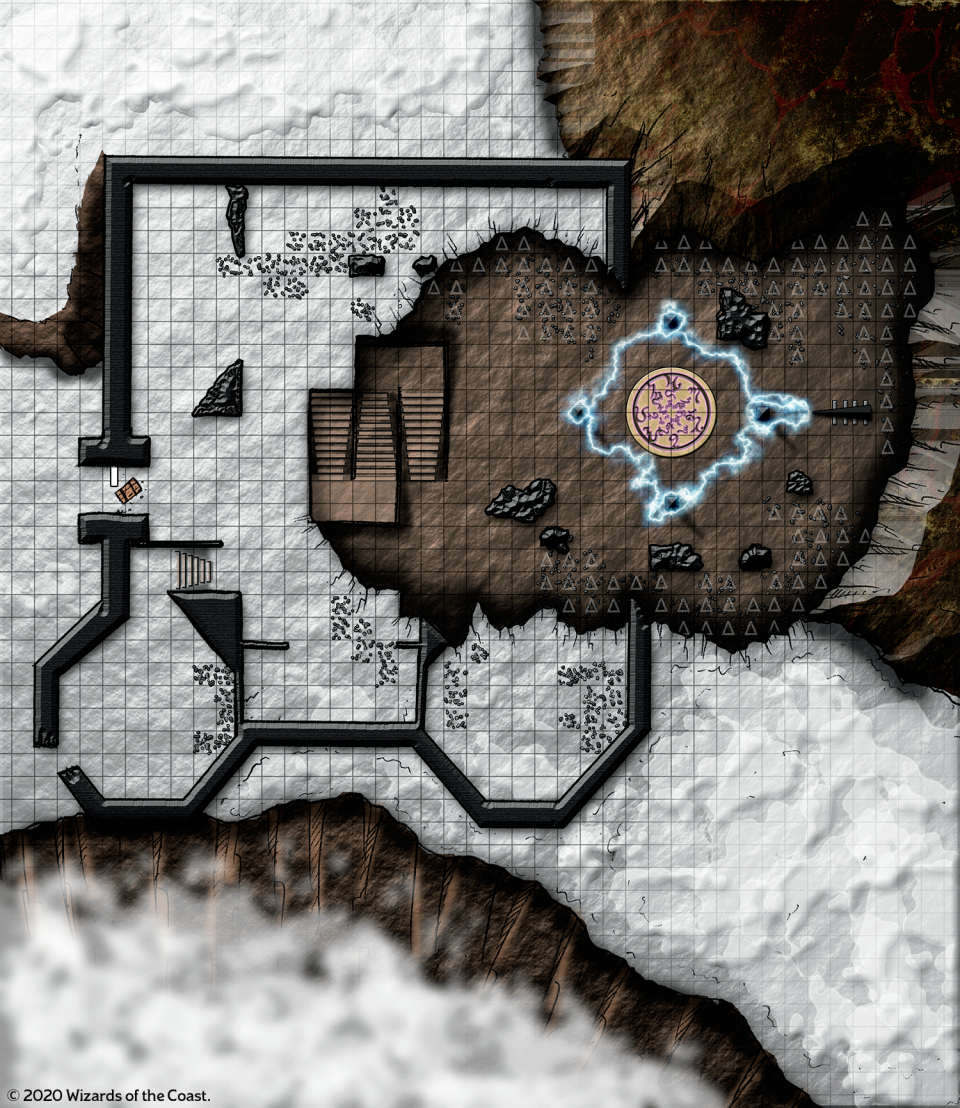
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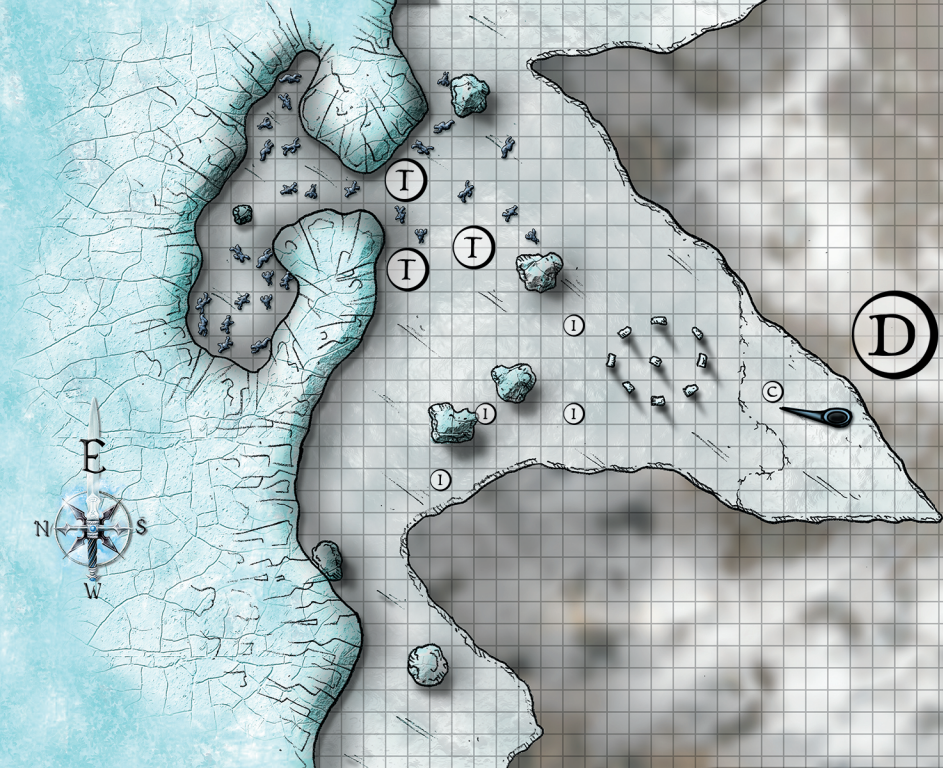
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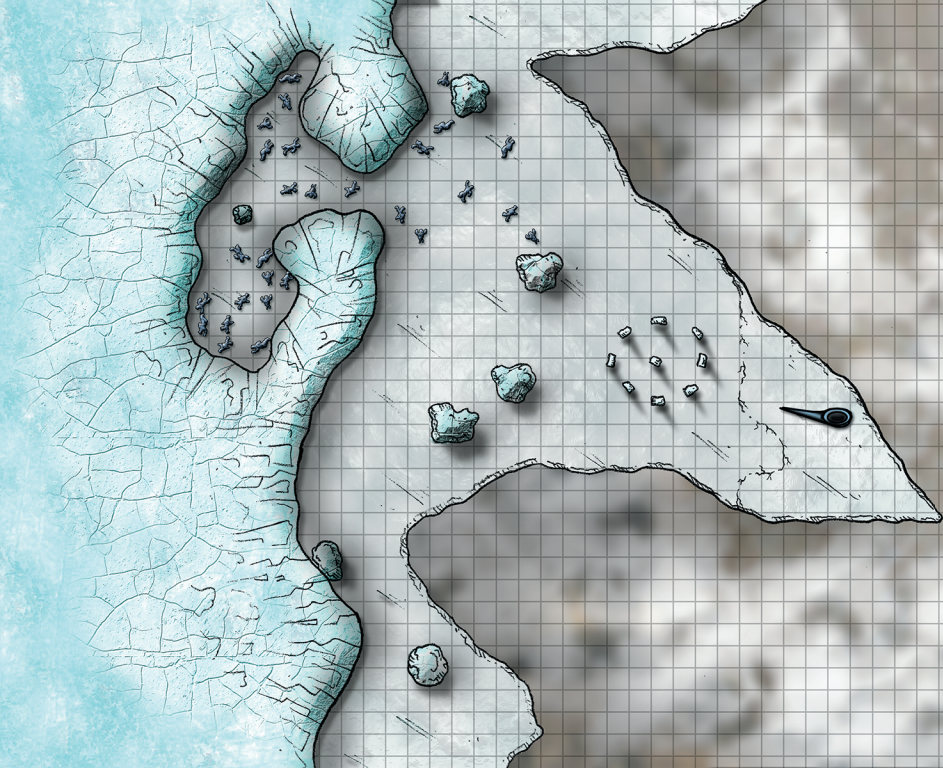








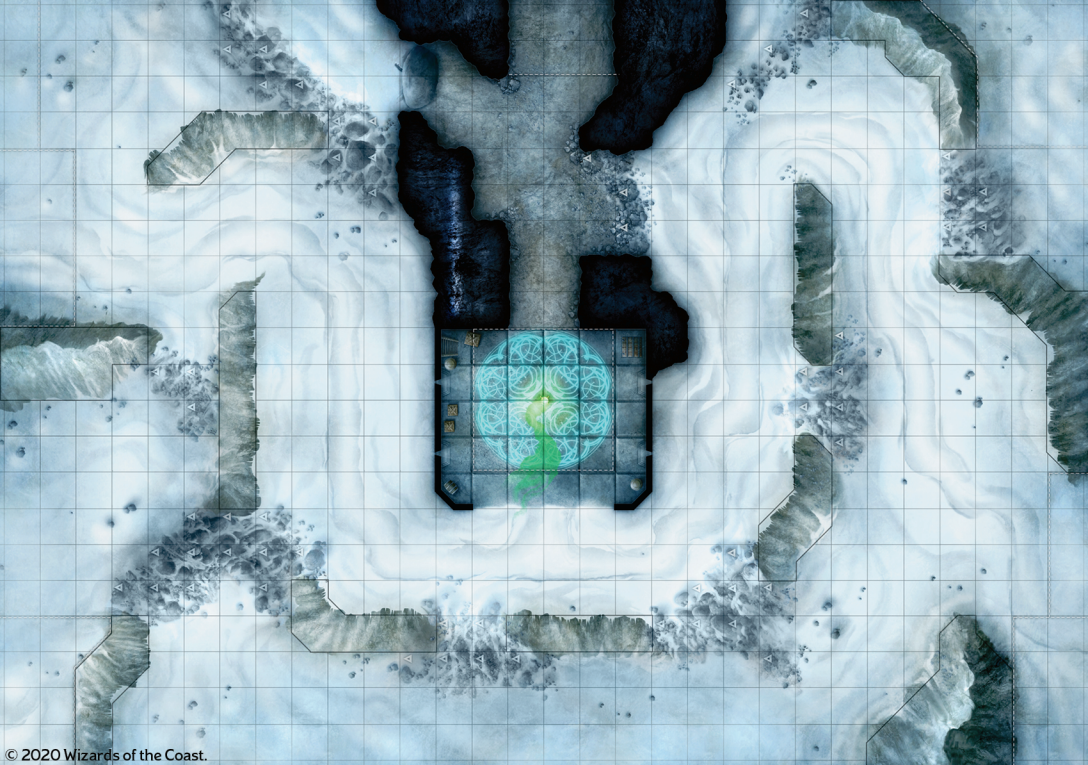












# Unearthed Arcana: Subclasses Revisited

Sharing proposed new character subclasses empowered by dragons.

By Dan Dillon, with Jeremy Crawford, Ben Petrisor, Taymoor Rehman, and James Wyatt



## Playtest Material

The material here is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not refined by final game development and editing. They aren't officially part of the game and aren't permitted in D&D Adventurers League events.

If we decide to make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

Two new subclasses have been added to *Unearthed Arcana*, bolstering previous revisions that can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). In these latest additions, monks take on draconic characteristics and abilities by following the Way of the Ascendant Dragon, while rangers gain a drake companion with the Drakewarden subclass.

## Monk: Way of the Ascendant Dragon

Monks who follow the Monastic Tradition the Way of the Ascendant Dragon revere the power and grandeur of draconic creatures. They alter their own ki to resonate with the might of dragons, channeling it to augment their prowess in battle, bolster their allies, and soar through the air.

The Ascendant Dragon Origin table offers random explanations of how a monk may have unlocked the power of dragons through their ki. Options include everything from observing a dragon and studying at a monastery to discovering the new techniques from a scroll or through a dream.

At 3rd level, a Way of the Ascendant Dragon monk learns to speak, read, and write Draconic, changes their damage type to match the dragons they emulate, and rerolls Charisma (Intimidation) or (Persuasion) checks. They can also replace one of their attacks with an exhalation of draconic energy in either a 20-foot cone or a 30-foot line.

At 6th level, when they use Step of the Wind, they can unfurl spectral draconic wings from their back and gain a flying speed equal to their walking speed. At 11th level, their draconic ki now radiates from them, providing resistance to their chosen damage type and hitting attacking enemies with waves of destructive energy.

At 17th level, the monk's draconic ki reaches its peak. They gain blindsight out to 30 feet and when they damage a creature with their breath weapon, the energy clings to the target and deals damage at the start of each of its turns. Activating their draconic aura now also blasts any number of creatures they can see within it, dealing 4d10 damage.

## Ranger: Drakewarden

Drakewardens are rangers who use their magical connection with nature to form an enduring bond with a drake. This link allows the ranger to share in the awe-inspiring power wielded by dragons and to summon a minor dragon to their side.

The Drakewarden Origin table offers random possibilities to decide how your ranger gained their bond with the drake. Options include everything from having drunk a few drops of dragon blood and been infused with draconic power to being part of a secret order of rangers who guard lore relating to those creatures.

At 3rd level, a Drakewarden ranger gains a deeper connection to dragon kind, learning to speak, read, and write Draconic, and gaining the thaumaturgy cantrip. They can also magically summon the drake they are bound to and have it act alongside them.

At 7th level, that bond intensifies and the ranger gains resistance to the drake's damage type. The drake's bite attack also increases the damage it deals and the creature gains either a swimming speed of 40 feet, the ability to breathe both air and water, or grows wings that give it a flying speed of 40 feet.

At higher levels, either the ranger or the drake can exhale a 30-foot cone of damaging breath. As the bond reaches the pinnacle of its power, the drake grows to become Large size, its bite deals more damage, and the ranger can use their reaction to give themselves or the drake resistance to damage when they're within 30 feet of each other.

# UNEARTHED ARCANA 2020

## Subclasses, Part 5

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- In early playtests such as this, character options are rarely tuned for multiclassing. We are nonetheless interested in multiclass-related feedback, accounting for it if we finalize the design for publication.

This document provides two playtest options:

**Way of the Ascendant Dragon**, a new monk subclass that emulates the power of dragons  
**Drakewarden**, a new ranger subclass with a drake companion

## Monk

At 3rd level, a monk gains the Monastic Tradition feature. Here is a playtest option for that feature: Way of the Ascendant Dragon.

### Way of the Ascendant Dragon

Monks who follow the Way of the Ascendant Dragon revere the power and grandeur of dragons. They alter their own ki to resonate with draconic might, channeling it to augment their prowess in battle, soar through the air, and to bolster their allies.

As a follower of this Monastic Tradition, you decide how you unlocked the power of dragons through your ki. The Ascendant Dragon Origin table offers some possibilities.

### Ascendant Dragon Origin

#### d6 Origin

- 1 You honed your abilities by observing a dragon and aligning your ki with their world-altering power.
- 2 A dragon personally took an active role in shaping your inner energy.
- 3 You studied at a monastery that traces its teachings back centuries or more to a single dragon's instruction.
- 4 You spent long stretches meditating in the region of influence of an ancient dragon's lair, absorbing its ambient magic.
- 5 You found a scroll written in Draconic that contained inspiring new techniques.
- 6 After a dream that featured a five-handed dragonborn you awoke with altered ki, reflecting the breaths of dragons.

## Draconic Disciple

### 3rd-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature

You can channel your draconic ki to imbue your unarmed strikes with the essence of a dragon's breath and to use your connection with draconic creatures to magnify your presence. You gain the following benefits:

- When you damage a target with an unarmed strike, you can change the damage type to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison.
- If you can't already, you learn to speak, read, and write Draconic.
- If you fail a Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check, you can use your reaction to reroll the check, as you tap into the mighty presence of dragons. Once this feature turns a failure into a success, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## Breath of the Dragon

### 3rd-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature

You can channel your ki into destructive waves of energy like the dragons you emulate. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can replace one of the attacks with an exhalation of draconic energy in either a 20-foot cone or a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide (your choice). Choose

Subclasses, Part 5 (select to view)

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# UNEARTHED ARCANA 2020

## Subclasses, Part 5

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- When you damage a target with an unarmed strike, you can change the damage type to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison.
- If you can't already, you learn to speak, read, and write Draconic.
- If you fail a Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check, you can use your reaction to reroll the check, as you tap into the mighty presence of dragons. Once this feature turns a failure into a success, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## Breath of the Dragon

### *3rd-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature*

You can channel your ki into destructive waves of energy like the dragons you emulate. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can replace one of the attacks with an exhalation of draconic energy in either a 20-foot cone or a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide (your choice). Choose

a damage type: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison. Each creature in the area must make a Dexterity saving throw against your ki save DC, taking damage of the chosen type equal to two rolls of your Martial Arts die on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

At 11th level, the damage of your breath increases to three rolls of your Martial Arts die.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. While you have no uses available, you can spend 1 ki point to use this feature again.

## Wings Unfurled

*6th-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature*

When you use your Step of the Wind, you can unfurl spectral draconic wings from your back that vanish at the end of your turn. While the wings exist, you have a flying speed equal to your walking speed.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. While you have no uses available, you can spend 1 additional ki point when you activate Step of the Wind to use this feature again.

## Aspect of the Wurm

*11th-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature*

The power of your draconic ki now radiates from you, protecting your allies from harm and punishing any who raise arms against them. As a bonus action, you can create an aura of draconic power that radiates 30 feet from you for 1 minute. Choose acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage, and for the duration, you gain the following effects:

- You and your allies within your aura gain resistance to the chosen damage type.
- Waves of destructive energy flow out from you and your allies when any of you are attacked. When you or one of your allies in the aura is hit by an attack made by another creature within the aura, the target that was hit can use their reaction to deal an amount of damage of the chosen type equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die to the attacker.

Once you use this bonus action, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend 4 ki points to use it again.

## Ascendant Aspect

*17th-level Way of the Ascendant Dragon feature*

Your draconic ki reaches its peak. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain blindsight out to 30 feet. Within that range, you can effectively see anything that isn't behind total cover, even if you're blinded or in darkness. Moreover, you can see an invisible creature within that range, unless the creature successfully hides from you.
- When you damage a creature with your Breath of the Dragon, the energy clings to the target. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it takes damage of the type your breath dealt equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die. At the end of its turn, the creature can repeat the save, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- When you activate your Aspect of the Wurm, draconic fury explodes from you. Choose any number of creatures you can see within your aura. Those creatures each take 4d10 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage (your choice).

## Ranger

At 3rd level, a ranger gains the Ranger Archetype feature. Here is a playtest option for that feature: the Drakewarden.

## Drakewarden

---

Drakewardens are rangers who use their magical connection with nature to form an enduring bond with a minor dragon, a drake. This bond allows the ranger to summon the drake to their side and to share in the awe-inspiring power wielded by dragons.

Consider how your ranger gained their bond with the drake. The Drakewarden Origin table offers some examples.

## Drakewarden Origin

### d6 Origin

- 1 You studied a dragon's scale or claw, or a trinket from its hoard, and created your bond through the token's lingering draconic magic.
- 2 A secret order of rangers who collect and guard draconic lore taught you their ways.
- 3 A true dragon gave you a drake egg to care for. When it hatched, the drake bonded to you.
- 4 You drank a few drops of dragon blood, forever infusing your nature magic with draconic power.
- 5 An ancient Draconic inscription on a standing stone empowered you when you read it aloud.
- 6 You had a vivid dream of a mysterious man, accompanied by seven yellow canaries, who warned you of impending doom. When you awoke, your drake was there, watching you.

## Draconic Gift

### 3rd-level Drakewarden feature

The bond you share with your drake creates a deeper connection to dragon kind, granting you understanding and empowering your presence. You gain the following benefits:

- If you can't already, you learn to speak, read, and write Draconic.
- You learn the *thaumaturgy* cantrip, which is a ranger spell for you.

## Drake Companion

### 3rd-level Drakewarden feature

You can magically summon the drake bound to you. As an action, you can summon the drake, which appears in an unoccupied space of your choice that you can see within 30 feet of you.

The drake is friendly to you and your companions and obeys your commands. See its game statistics in the Drake Companion stat block, which uses your proficiency bonus (PB) in several places. When you summon the drake, choose a damage type listed in its Draconic Essence trait. You can determine the cosmetic characteristics of the drake such as its color, scale texture, or any visible effect of its Draconic Essence; your choice has no effect on its game statistics.

In combat, the drake shares your initiative count, but it takes its turn immediately after yours. It can move and use its reaction on its own, but the only action it takes on its turn is the Dodge action, unless you take a bonus action on your turn to command it to take another action. That action can be one in its stat block or some other action. If you are incapacitated, the drake can take any action of its choice, not just Dodge.

Once you summon the drake, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a spell slot of 1st level or higher to summon it.

The drake remains for a number of hours equal to your proficiency bonus, until it is reduced to 0 hit points, until you use this feature to summon the drake again, or until you die. Anything the drake was wearing or carrying is left behind when the drake vanishes.

## Drake Companion

### Small dragon

**Armor Class** 14 + PB (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 5 + five times your ranger level (the drake has a number of hit dice [d10s] equal to your ranger level)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (–1)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +1 plus PB, Wis +2 plus PB

**Damage Immunities** determined by the drake's Draconic Essence trait

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** — **Proficiency Bonus (PB)** equals your bonus

**Draconic Essence.** When you summon the drake, choose a damage type: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison. The chosen type determines the drake's damage immunity, the damage of its bite, and the damage of its Infused Strikes trait.

### Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 plus PB to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 piercing damage plus PB damage of a type determined by the drake's Draconic Essence.

## Reactions

---

**Infused Strikes.** When another creature within 30 feet of the drake that it can see hits with a weapon attack, the drake infuses the strike with its essence, causing the attack to deal an extra 1d6 damage of the type determined by its Draconic Essence.

## Bond of Fang and Scale

*7th-level Drakewarden feature*

The bond you share with your drake intensifies, protecting you and stoking the drake's fury. While your drake is summoned, you and the drake gain the following benefits:

- You gain resistance to the damage type chosen for the drake's Draconic Essence.
- Choose one of the following: the drake gains a swimming speed of 40 feet and can breathe both air and water, or the drake grows wings and gains a flying speed of 40 feet.
- The drake's bite attack deals an extra 1d6 damage of the type chosen for its Draconic Essence.

## Drake's Breath

*11th-level Drakewarden feature*

As an action, you can exhale a 30-foot cone of damaging breath or cause your drake to exhale it. Choose acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage. Each creature in the cone must make a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC, taking 6d6 damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

This damage increases to 8d6 when you reach 15th level in this class.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a spell slot of 3rd level or higher to use it again.

## Perfected Bond

*15th-level Drakewarden feature*

Your bond to your drake reaches the pinnacle of its power. While your drake is summoned, you and the drake gain the following benefits:

- The drake grows to Large size.

- The drake's bite attack deals an extra 1d6 damage of the type chosen for its Draconic Essence (for a total of 2d6 extra damage).
- When either you or the drake takes damage while you're within 30 feet of each other, you can use your reaction to give yourself or the drake resistance to that instance of damage.

# Comic: Icewind Dale Rime of the Frostmaiden

There's a moose loose with a frozen caboose in Jason Thompson's latest masterpiece.

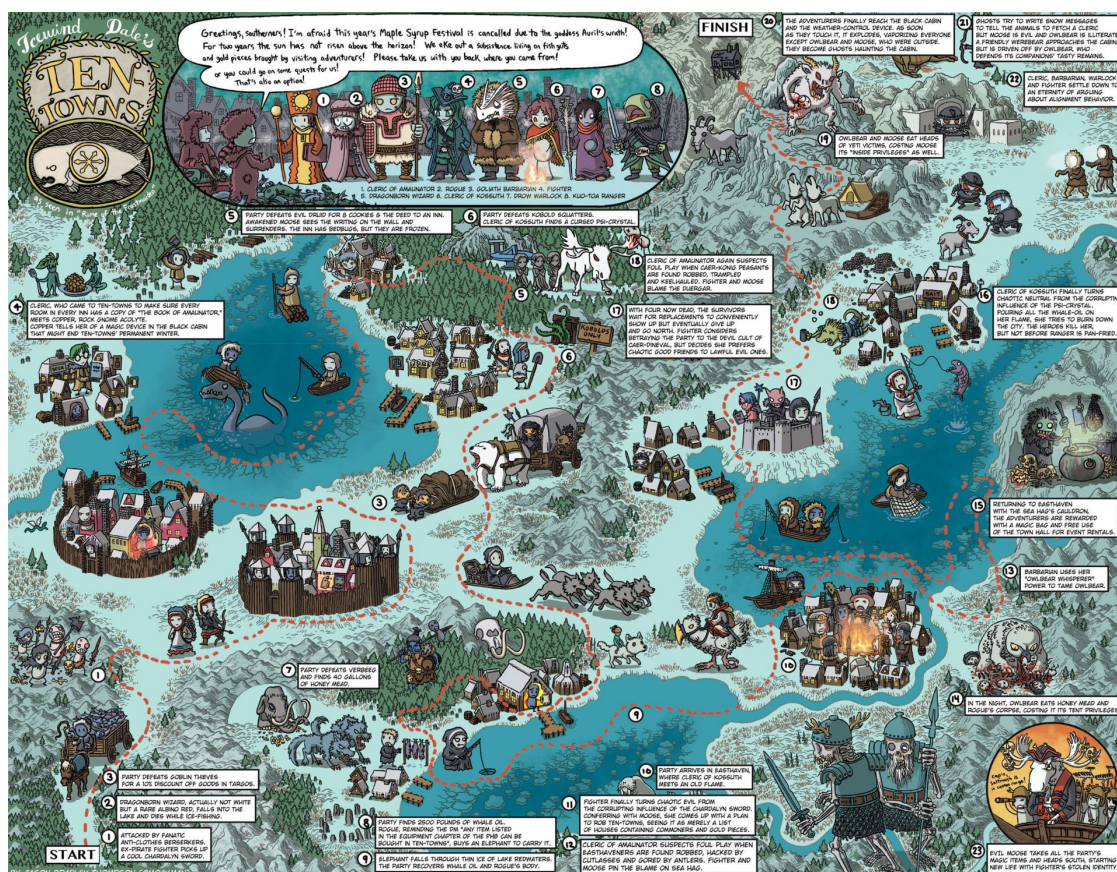
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**WARNING: THIS WALKTHROUGH MAP CONTAINS  
SPOILERS FOR  
*ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN***

---

A rogue, a barbarian, a fighter, a wizard, a warlock, a ranger, and two clerics walk into Ten-Towns. If that sounds like the start of a joke, it is! This seemingly innocent jumping off point leads to a hilarious adventure in the frozen north, as the party adds new members almost as quickly as it loses them.

Cartographic comedian Jason Thompson skates expertly on thin ice (unlike some of his subjects) as his put-upon party blunder their way through an avalanche of quests that will be familiar to players currently trekking through the Frostmaiden's bleak kingdom.



(Select to view)

For a higher resolution image, [click here](#).

***Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*** is available now with an MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. Also available as a digital version at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Comic artist, author and illustrator Jason Thompson currently runs a Monday night gaming group in San Francisco. His works include the Eisner-nominated *Manga: The Complete Guide*, *King of RPGs*, H.P. Lovecraft's *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, and the tabletop game *Mangaka: The Fast & Furious Game of Drawing Comics*. His favorite things to draw are landscapes, plants, reptiles and amphibians and you can view more of his work at [his official website](#). For more from Thompson, check out his incredible adventure modules *Six Faces of Death* and *The Barber of Silverymoon*.



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# FINISH

21 GHOSTS TRY TO WRITE SNOW MESSAGES TO TELL THE ANIMALS TO FETCH A CLERIC BUT MOOSE IS EVIL AND OWLBEAR IS ILLITERATE. A FRIENDLY WEREBEAR APPROACHES THE CABIN BUT IS DRIVEN OFF BY OWLBEAR, WHO DEFENDS ITS COMPANIONS' TASTY REMAINS.

**22** CLERIC, BARBARIAN, WARLOCK, AND FIGHTER SETTLE DOWN TO AN ETERNITY OF ARGUING ABOUT ALIGNMENT BEHAVIOR.

OWLBEAR AND MOOSE EAT HEADS OF YETI VICTIMS, COSTING MOOSE ITS "INSIDE PRIVILEGES" AS WELL.

1. CLERIC OF AMAUNATOR 2. ROGUE 3. GOLIATH BARBARIAN 4. FIGHTER  
5. DRAGONBORN WIZARD 6. CLERIC OF KOSSUTH 7. DROW WARLOCK 8. KHO-TOA RANGER

**S** PARTY DEFEATS EVIL DRUID FOR 8 COOKIES & THE DEED TO AN INN. AWAKENED MOOSE SEES THE WRITING ON THE WALL AND SURRENDERS. THE INN HAS BEDBUGS, BUT THEY ARE FROZEN.

**6** PARTY DEFEATS KOBOLD SQUATTERS. CLERIC OF KOGGUTH FINDS A CURSED BEL-CRYSTAL

CLERIC OF AMALINATOR AGAIN SUSPECTS FOUL PLAY WHEN CAER-KONIG PEASANTS ARE FOUND ROBBED, TRAMPLED AND KEELHAULED. FIGHTER AND MOOSE BLAME THE DUERGAR.

17 WITH FOUR NOW DEAD, THE SURVIVORS WAIT FOR REPLACEMENTS TO CONVENIENTLY SHOW UP BUT EVENTUALLY GIVE UP AND GO NORTH. FIGHTER CONSIDERS BETRAYING THE PARTY TO THE DEVIL CULT OF CAER-DINEVAL, BUT DECIDES SHE PREFERENCES CHAOTIC GOOD FRIENDS TO LAWFUL EVIL ONES.

CLERIC OF KOSSUTH FINALLY TURNS CHAOTIC NEUTRAL FROM THE CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF THE PSI-CRYSTAL. POURING ALL THE WHALE-OIL ON HER FLAME, SHE TRIES TO BURN DOWN THE CITY. THE HEROES KILL HER, BUT NOT BEFORE RANGER IS PAN-FRIED.

**15** RETURNING TO EASTHAVEN WITH THE SEA HAG'S CAULDRON, THE ADVENTURERS ARE REWARDED WITH A MAGIC BAG AND FREE USE OF THE TOWN HALL FOR EVENT RENTALS.

3 BARBARIAN USES HER "OWLBEAR WHISPERER" POWER TO TAME OWLBEAR.

14 IN THE NIGHT, OWLBEAR EATS HONEY MEAD AND ROGUE'S CORPSE, COSTING IT ITS TENT PRIVILEGES

23 EVIL MOOSE TAKES ALL THE PARTY'S  
MAGIC ITEMS AND HEADS SOUTH, STARTING A

FIGHTER FINALLY TURNS CHAOTIC EVIL FROM THE CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF THE CHARDALYN SWORD. CONFERRING WITH MOOSE, SHE COMES UP WITH A PLAN TO ROB TEN-TOWNS, SEEING IT AS MERELY A LIST OF HOUSES CONTAINING COMMONERS AND GOLD PIECES.

CLERIC OF AMALINATOR SUSPECTS FOUL PLAY WHEN EASTHAVENERS ARE FOUND ROBBED, HACKED BY CUTLASSES AND GORED BY ANTLERS. FIGHTER AND MOOSE PIN THE BLAME ON SEA HAG.

8 PARTY FINDS 2500 POUNDS OF WHALE OIL. ROGUE, REMINDING THE DM "ANY ITEM LISTED IN THE EQUIPMENT CHAPTER OF THE PHB CAN BE

**9** ELEPHANT FALLS THROUGH THIN ICE OF LAKE REDWATERS. THE PARTY RECOVERS WHALE OIL AND ROGUE'S BODY.

**7** PARTY DEFEATS VERBEEG AND FINDS 40 GALLONS OF HONEY MEAD.

PARTY DEFEATS GOBLIN THIEVES  
FOR A 10% DISCOUNT OFF GOODS IN TARGOS.

DRAGONBORN WIZARD, ACTUALLY NOT WHITE  
BUT A RARE ALBINO RED, FALLS INTO THE  
LAKE AND DIES WHILE ICE-FISHING.

ATTACKED BY FANATIC  
ANTI-CLOTHES BERSERKERS.  
EX-PIRATE FIGHTER PICKS UP  
A COOL GUARDIAN SWORD

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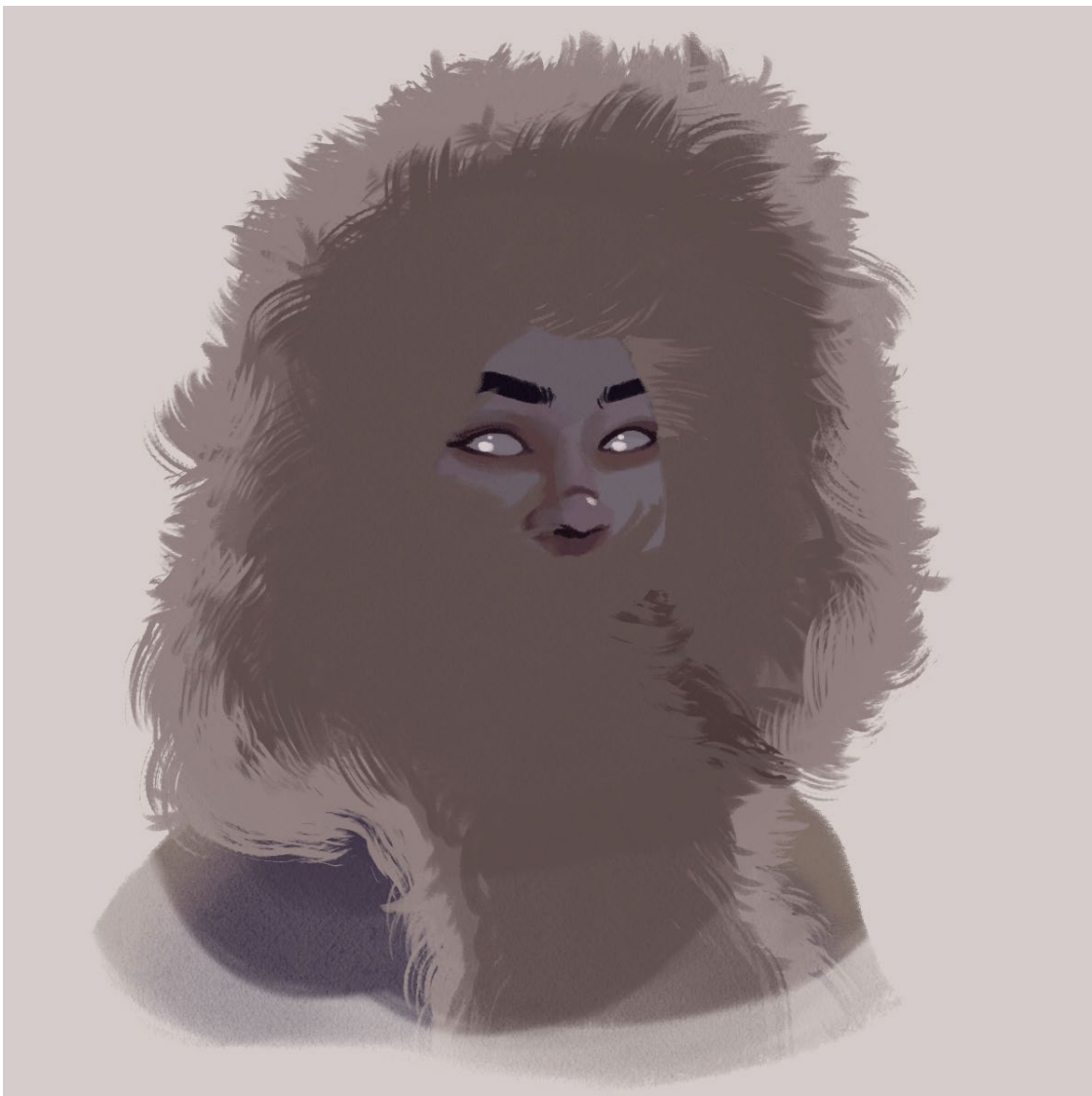
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## Character Concepts: Winter Fashion

What do you wear in a season that can only be described as endless winter? Samantha Darcy profiles the best dressed inhabitants of Icewind Dale.

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**F**ar to the north, in the everlasting darkness of Icewind Dale, bitter winds whip up from the sea and pierce the valleys, spurred on by the wrath of the Frostmaiden. The biting cold means that extra precaution must be taken when dressing for adventure, lest

our beloved characters succumb!

Fashion and clothing—whether practical or purely aesthetic—is sometimes the last thing a player might consider when creating a character for their campaign, but it can contribute as much to the setting as the landscape. We might have a set idea in our minds of what a **wizard** or a **pirate** looks like, yet their personalities and day to day activities will differ enough that no two wizards or pirates will look alike. Diverse biomes, even within fantasy realms, also call for appropriate clothing, and considering what characters or NPCs are wearing helps to create a vivid environment.



Practicality is often the main goal in Icewind Dale, where the harsh weather and eternal night guide its inhabitants to clothes that have been tried and tested to withstand the elements. Historically speaking within the real world, when explorers first ventured to Antarctica and

experienced one of the most brutal climates on earth, effective and practical clothing took a long time to get ‘right’. Discovering what would not only keep them warm, but also safe, required a great deal of trial and error in those early days.

As stated on page 14 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, “all characters begin the adventure with a free set of cold weather clothing in addition to the starting equipment they receive from their class and background choices.” But let’s take a closer look at what cold weather clothing might entail, and how players might customize such apparel for their characters.

## COLD COMFORT

The dangers of traveling in the cold back then were many. The physicality of the journey—whether walking or sledding—would cause explorers to sweat, which would then freeze if they became too cool. This made clothing inflexible and potentially dangerous, risking frostbite or worse. A base layer of lighter clothing, worn for sweat-wicking purposes, eventually came into use to help prevent this. Eddie Bauer, of the outdoor clothing company of the same name, created and patented the down coat after his own woolen coat became wet and frozen on a fishing expedition, almost causing him to die of hypothermia. Wet wool is extremely heavy, frozen wool even more so, hence the desire for the lightness and warmth of a quilted down.



Some explorers adopted the same techniques practiced by the Inuit people, who wore furs and skins. These were extremely effective, being both loose enough for movement and having the ability to be pulled tighter for warmth if needed. The hooded parka, which covered the neck and kept in more heat, also came from Inuit design. Traditional Inuit parkas were made of two layers of caribou skin, with the fur of the inner layer facing toward the body (to trap insulating warm air) and the fur of the outer layer facing away from the body. However, despite being the most effective material when it came to producing cold weather clothing, fur suffered from the fact that it was both difficult and very expensive to repair if damaged.

In addition to being warm, it was important for clothing to be waterproof. The Inuit would wear a top layer made of the gut of marine mammals, which kept them dry. Bringing something similar into your game might allow for a creative way to flavor it for D&D—

there's a vast menagerie of animals and monsters to choose from, including everything from giant ice frogs to kraken. Waterproofing outdoor wear can also be achieved through waxing: paraffin wax added to cotton not only created fabric that water beads up on, but also made the fibers more durable.

## HAT TRICK

When you think of headgear for cold climates, you might picture an ushanka hat—the Russian fur cap with ear flaps that tie under the chin. While fur hats with ear protection have been used for centuries in Eurasian, Slavic, and Scandinavian countries, the round design of the ushanka cap was developed in the 17th century. They can be worn with high-necked jackets or scarves covering the neck in lieu of a hood.

Footwear for snowy climates also called for layers: felt boots, which were not waterproof, were worn inside heavier boots as a liner. A material such as the gut of marine mammals can then be sewn on the bottom to make them waterproof. Fur gaiters (a covering worn over the shoe, usually going up to the knee over pants or other legwear) protect shoes and lower legs from snow, keeping the clothing underneath dry. These were generally fastened by laces (tightly at the top and bottom to keep snow from making its way in) and could be removed and shaken out should they become too caked with snow.

It's also important to think about how your character's upbringing might influence their choice of clothing and fabrics, and what might be made available to them because of it. A noble elf may have a different idea of what constitutes appropriate winter-weather fashion than a guild artisan gnome. Does your character wear an elaborate and expensive fur coat? Or do they simply wrap themselves in a few skins and call it a day? This status can also be reflected in choices of color and pattern. Camouflage may be of importance to your adventurers, or perhaps they'd prefer something brightly colored to keep from losing each other in a white-out.

Consider also looking to real-world cultures for inspiration. There are plenty of examples that might inspire you, including clothing from parts of Scandinavia, Russia, and Canada, as well as the Sámi people and the Inuits of Alaska. Look at how their garments are constructed

to hold up to extreme weather, even in the modern day, and find creative ways to adapt those concepts within your game, either through material or decorative design.

## PRACTICAL MAGICAL

Of course, this being Dungeons & Dragons, we can't forget the plethora of magical items at our disposal that could also contribute to a character's look, such as *boots of the winterlands* (as suggested by **Guest Editor Hal Howard**). Their ability to ignore the difficult terrain created by ice or snow is paired brilliantly with cold resistance, which not only allows characters to tolerate lower temperatures without changing their style, but might have the added bonus of keeping you alive if you find yourself facing off against a certain Frostmaiden.

Without such protection, it's unlikely your characters will be able to maintain their regular look without burying it beneath layers of warmer layers. Still, covering up may provide some much-needed anonymity in Icewind Dale, where a touch of mystery may be necessary. In addition to their regular background, characters in *Rime of the Frostmaiden* can also choose a "secret" (see Appendix B on page 264). It may be beneficial to hide your face, depending on the horrors your character has committed!



Even though everyone in the party may end up looking like members of a cult that's really into fur, it's important that characters don't neglect to cover up. Leaving any skin exposed risks frostbite! Consider heavy parkas, gaiters, fur gloves and mittens, masks, muffs, and scarves. Heavy clothing, while potentially encumbering, could mean the difference between life and death.

The Wilderness Survival section on pages 10-11 of the adventure specifically covers the hazards of wintry travel. Adventurers are advised to stay warm and dry out there. And in the event that cold weather clothing may be damaged (or stolen) during the course of the adventure, a DM might choose to add better gear as part of a treasure hoard. Sometimes the proverbial socks and underwear do make the best gifts! Good luck out there.

***Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*** is available now with an

**MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. Also available as a digital version at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**.**

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## Dan Tovar

Our introduction to members of the D&D Team and their roles continues with the Senior Producer for the D&D studio.

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**T**he D&D Team relishes the opportunity to work on the world's greatest roleplaying game, and we're also aware there are a fair number of folks interested in learning more about entering the gaming industry professionally.



Dan Tovar

With that in mind, each issue we'll be chatting with staff members from a diverse set of roles to find out how they came to be valued members of our party and what advice they have for someone who might be looking to follow a similar path. Dan Tovar, Senior Producer for the D&D studio, follows **Community Lead Brandy Camel** into our *zone of truth*.

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### **Where in Faerûn or the wider multiverse do you hail from?**

My initial spawning point into the multiverse was New York. Since then I have adventured across the country and lived in Connecticut, before moving to California and starting my games career. I came to Seattle, where the D&D Team is based, around ten years ago.

### **What is your character class?**

I'm the Senior Producer for the D&D studio. I oversee the production of all our physical output, including the tabletop roleplaying books and ancillary products such as dice sets and DM screens. I have a team of producers that report to me and manage the various aspects of the production pipelines: content creation (adventure and rules text, as well as art creation); the editing and assembly of text and art into book format; coordinating the printing and distribution of the products; and the internal marketing and PR.

I spend my time collaborating with the design, art, and leadership teams to problem solve issues that arise during development, ensuring all current products stay on track, while also building out our future product roadmaps. As you can imagine there are a lot of contributors and moving pieces, so there's a lot of room for things to go... not as planned. It can take shifting resources around to help buy time for one aspect of development or another. Each product can take

years to develop, and of course we never have just one product in the pipeline at a time, so it can be quite the juggling act.

### **What made you want to join this party?**

D&D has been a part of my life as far back as I can remember. Working on the books that shaped my childhood is a dream come true. The first time I got to see my name in one of our books was a moment that my 10-year-old self would have been super excited and proud of.

### **What character background led to you getting the job?**

I've been a games producer for more than fifteen years, primarily in the digital video game space. I have worked at Namco Bandai, Zynga, EA, Sony, and even 3DO. I've helped publish all sorts of games in my career; such as: *Magic Duels/Duels of the Planeswalkers*, *Splatterhouse 2010*, *The Fast And The Furious*, *Sniper Elite*, *FrontierVille*, *Dark Cloud*, and a host of *Pac-Man* related games too numerous to name.



Splatterhouse 2010

But D&D hasn't just been one of my hobbies since I was a kid, it's been foundational to so many other games and genres. Its novels, art, and experiences have always been part of my life so that alignment of professional experience and personal interests lined up perfectly with the needs of the team.

### **Is multiclassing required?**

Production is absolutely about using a wide variety of skills. It's a collaborative role so you need to be able to employ focused listening and also be able to determine possible outcomes. That's something only time and experience can provide.

### **What's a typical session like?**

Every day is different but the job always includes a very interesting cross section of business and creative conversations. Being able to hear designers talk about settings and monsters, and then switching over to talk about product costing and scheduling issues is a regular occurrence. Creating all of these amazing products is still a business, but it's an incredibly entertaining and fun team to be a part of.

### **Which moments have been worthy of retelling by bards?**

It's been really satisfying to jump in and add some structure to the team's creativity, helping them be more organized and keeping the key dates and milestones front and center. Getting to hear from them that their jobs are easier when they're more in control of what's happening has been wonderful.

### **Which of your footprints would be visible even under the influence of *pass without trace*?**

Even in a relatively short time, I've been a part of so many incredible products that have been interesting for different reasons, so it's hard to narrow one down. The *Dungeons & Dragons Essentials Kit* came with a challenging timeline but the team rallied behind such a great concept and opportunity. The *Dungeons & Dragons vs. Rick and Morty* crossover was a blast because the characters are so wild and whacky. Getting to collaborate with Matt Mercer on the *Explorer's Guide to Wildemount* was also a pleasure.



Dungeons & Dragons vs. Rick and Morty

### **Have there been any surprise rounds?**

I am continuously astounded by the creativity of our team members. The brainstorming sessions are so much fun to be a part of and the solutions that surface as part of those are always so interesting and collaborative.

Sometimes its brainstorming the contents of a box such as the *Essential's Kit* or *Curse of Strahd: Revamped*. Other times it's the perfect artist that can hit a unique vibe to match a particular setting. It might also be a specific monster, location or character that helps to connect the through line of a story or solve a plot hole.

But I think my favorites are the pre-production concept kick offs because everything is still a blank slate at that stage. Practical reality has yet to interfere so the ideas flow and nothing has to be cut yet.

### **When did you first play D&D?**

I've been a fan of D&D since I was about nine-years-old. I grew up near a book store/gift shop and I would buy all of my early D&D books there. They had dragon statues and posters of wizards up on the walls, and back in the mid-to-late '80s that was less of a common sight. I couldn't get enough fantasy, and once I found a couple of other kids that were into the same sort of stuff we'd spend hours and hours creating characters and worlds. It really is amazing to come full

circle and find myself working on the brand that helped shape my lifelong interests.

### **Have you ever become stunned during a TTRPG?**

Jim Zub as Minsc beating Chris Perkin's double disadvantage, twice, during the *D&D Live game in 2019*. That was so improbable and so hilarious to witness. It was almost immediately followed by Matt Mercer as Boo cashing in his *soul coin* to successfully crash land a bat-shaped aircraft with the whole party on board. I have priceless memories of watching that happen.



D&D Live 2019

### **What's your favorite thing about D&D?**

The creativity and collaboration—getting to see how people react and rally together is so inspiring. I've been teaching my 10-year-old daughter how to play and hearing her yell, "*Ray of frost!*" as her tabaxi sorceress freezes a goblin is my new favorite aspect of the game. I also love collecting the books for all the amazing art and content. And, of course, all the dice! There's something really satisfying about having the tactical interaction with those physical goodies.

### **What are your downtime activities?**

When I'm not working on D&D, I love making music and cooking. I've been in bands since I was a teenager and I don't know that I could ever stop. It has a lot of the same core elements as D&D—collaboration and creativity.

### **Which other fandoms or pop-culture phenomena do you follow?**

So many! *Saga*, *The Boys*, *Archer*, *The Mandalorian*, *Venture Brothers*, *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*, *Dragon Prince*, *John Wick*, as well as anything Terry Gilliam, Cohen Bros, or Mel Brooks. Musically it's '70s heavy metal, '80s east coast punk rock, and heavy psych rock.

### **Who rolls best for Performance?**

*Not Another D&D Podcast* is hilarious.



Not Another D&D Podcast

### **What's your coolest artifact?**

Some of my favorite desktop goodies are actually the mock ups and prototypes of the early designs of our products. I love seeing how the different elements develop over time. The transformation can be really impressive for some of the more complicated products.

### **What do you like best about this party role?**

It's amazing to see what an uplifting impact Dungeons & Dragons has on the world. The game is responsible for many positive things in our society beyond its entertainment value.

**You can hear more from Dan Tovar and connect with him on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).**

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# Next Issue: Dragon+ 36

Join us as the calendar flips over to 2021...



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**N**ew year, new characters! When we return for our first issue of 2021, former *Dragon+* cover artist **Max Dunbar** teams up with writer extraordinaire Adam Lee to create interesting and exciting characters ready to drop into your games. If you've seen Dunbar's work on the official D&D comic and *Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus*, and have read **Lee's brilliant tale of awakened cats** that continued this issue, you're hopefully as excited as we are to see what this partnership can conjure up.

We'll also be speaking with Stefan McNinch about his use of Dungeons & Dragons in schools. His experience over seven years in the classroom and in the after-school D&D club he founded has measured an improvement in overall reading skills, boosted the kids' general problem-solving abilities, and helped build confidence.

Alongside that mental nourishment, we'll have more from the writers of the *Heroes' Feast* cook book, suggesting perfect fantasy fare to serve up for Valentine's. There's all this, plus exclusive previews, all of our regulars such as *Streaming Highlights*, another delve into the imposing *Dragon* archive, and much, *much* more!

(Contents subject to change)

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